

BIROn - Birkbeck Institutional Research Online

Davis, Isabel (2011) "The Trinite is our everlasting lover": marriage and trinitarian love in the later Middle Ages. *Speculum* 86 (4), pp. 914-963. ISSN 0038-7134.

Downloaded from: <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/id/eprint/5227/>

Usage Guidelines:

Please refer to usage guidelines at <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/policies.html>
contact lib-eprints@bbk.ac.uk.

or alternatively

“The Trinite is our everlasting lover”: Marriage and Trinitarian Love in the Later Middle Ages

By Isabel Davis

This essay is a history of an analogy. It charts a perceived relationship between the Trinity and the conjugal family in Anglo-French lay culture in the later Middle Ages. The association had long been known within theological discussions of the Trinity, antedating the works of St. Augustine, but his disapproving assessment was enduringly to inhibit its use. This essay shows the way that the analogy reemerged in the fourteenth century, bleeding through its theological bandages into debates about the ethics of human relationships. Where this interrelationship has been considered before by medievalists, it has been in criticism of William Langland's *Piers Plowman*. This essay treats that poem, too, but also maintains that the synergy between marriage and the Trinity was not only the preoccupation of an eccentric poet but had a much more widespread cultural relevance.¹ Indeed, I gather here a range of material, both literature and art, from across Europe between roughly the end of the thirteenth to the mid-fifteenth century; within that evidence, I identify a shared interest in reanimating the apparently exhausted topic of Trinitarianism and the family.

My argument is not that these various examples offer a homogeneous account of late-medieval sexual ethics or of Trinitarian devotion, although the sympathies and similarities I find here testify to the extraordinary international mobility of design and idea in this period. Often at cross-purposes, these diverse texts and images participate, sometimes very directly and sometimes indirectly, in a complex cultural conversation. The discussion of the Trinity, love, and marriage existed at an interesting confluence of different discursive currents, being variously involved in the aestheticization of *caritas* in Augustinian and Franciscan thought, the domestication and privatization of the liturgy, the ethical evalua-

I would like to thank the following for their encouragement, suggestions on, and readings of this work: Laura Salisbury, Richard Rowland, Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Clare A. Lees, Jane Gilbert, Anthony Bale, Paul E. Szarmach, Jacqueline Brown, and the anonymous readers at *Speculum*, the Medieval Urban Household Group at York, and the audiences at the papers delivered at the Universities of Sussex and Manchester.

¹ See, for example, Lawrence M. Clopper, “*Songes of rechelesnesse*”: Langland and the Franciscans (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1997), esp. pp. 118–21; M. Teresa Tavormina, “Kindly Similitude: Langland’s Matrimonial Trinity,” *Modern Philology* 80 (1982), 117–28; and Andrew Galloway, “Intellectual Pregnancy, Metaphysical Femininity, and the Social Doctrine of the Trinity in *Piers Plowman*,” *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 12 (1998), 117–52. Also, outside of *Piers Plowman* studies, Pamela Sheingorn has made a significant contribution to thinking through the relations between Trinitarian art and the representation of the family: “Appropriating the Holy Kinship: Gender and Family History,” in *Interpreting Cultural Symbols: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Society*, ed. Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn (Athens, Ga., 1990), pp. 169–98.

tion of Jean de Meun's continuation of the *Roman de la rose* in France, and the questions about clerical celibacy raised by English Lollards.

My principal interest in this topos is as evidence for the changing status of marriage over the period. It demonstrates, I hold, a late-medieval desire to select marriage from the larger and fuzzier category of *caritas*, to make marriage an especially favored type of human bond and a possible part of a superlative ethical life. Others have noted that this historical moment is one in which domestic and sexual ethics, even those that are now considered heteronormative, were far from fixed; my argument operates alongside theirs, offering a detailed exploration of one particular motif and the ammunition it gave to those who fought for an improvement in the status of matrimony as against the orthodox preference for virginity.² While marriage has been championed in other cultures, and perhaps just as fervently, the textures and terms of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century marriage debates had a singular character, and it is that historical particularity with which this essay is concerned.

I explore this analogy in four main sections and a conclusion. In the first I look at the history of the motif, showing its origins in Augustinian theology and coming to the new ways in which the analogy was considered in relation to the lived life in a selection of late-fourteenth-century English texts: the sermons of John Mirk, Langland's *Piers Plowman*, and Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Divine Love*, from the last of which the quotation in my title is borrowed. I shall position these texts on a spectrum between practice and theory, between liturgy and theology, suggesting that together they offer a stilled picture of the changing response to the topos at the close of the fourteenth century. In the second section I shall look in more detail at the symbolic rhetoric of the association by introducing the coeval art-historical evidence, especially from books of hours that feature a particular design with couples, sometimes with their children, kneeling in veneration to the Trinity, depicted in the form known as the "throne of grace." I particularly look at a Trinity illumination in the early-fifteenth-century Bolton Hours, considering it in relation to Langland's commentary on the relationship between the Trinity and marital ethics. By cross-questioning the visual and textual evidence I argue for the domestication of the liturgy and a special interest in sacramental aesthetics around marriage for which the Trinity was particularly useful.

In a turn to France, the third section of this article investigates readers' responses to the *Roman de la rose* on display in some of the illuminated manuscripts from the last half of the fourteenth century and within the so-called *querelle* of the *Rose* in the early fifteenth. The argument here follows a similar trajectory to that of Section 1, discovering a tendency to single out conjugality from the

² See, for example, Karma Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies: Female Sexuality When Normal Wasn't* (Minneapolis, 2005), p. xv, who suggests the Middle Ages was a time before the formation of those structures of heteronormativity that we recognize today. Glenn Burger, *Chaucer's Queer Nation*, *Medieval Cultures* 34 (Minneapolis, 2003), pp. 41–47, has considered the "hybridity" of marriage, principally in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and Sheingorn, "Appropriating the Holy Kinship," p. 290, has argued that the installation of increasingly patriarchal models of the conjugal family effected the destruction of the *hortus conclusus* and its "lushly female atmosphere."

broadier discussion of *caritas*, a tendency that is in telling contradistinction to the ways in which the same theme is treated in the *Rose* itself. The study of medieval *caritas* has been most pursued by D. W. Robertson, who, in his *Preface to Chaucer* (which also included an extended engagement with the *Roman de la rose*), set the way for considering the “two loves” in medieval thought and art.³ While, like Robertson, I embed a discussion of literature in art and theology, I do not argue—like Robertson and others after him—for the essentially moral nature of the *Roman de la rose* or of medieval literature more broadly. My argument throughout this section differs from Robertson’s discussion of *caritas* in two crucial ways: first, while allegory is a dominant form in this period, I present it in significant tension with equally sincere discussions about social ethics and the lived life; this was a moment, indeed, where these impulses were turning to face each other and not always peaceably. Secondly, and like others who have opposed the Robertsonian account of *caritas*, I do not believe that there was an agreed moral program to which late-medieval authors universally subscribed; instead I present a picture of the heterogeneous uses that were found for the ideology of *caritas* and that are in evidence in some very particular cultural spaces.⁴

In the fourth and final section I compare and contrast two examples that are at opposite ends not only of the period investigated in this essay but also of its geographical range: a manuscript from the early 1350s produced in the Angevin court of Naples and a pair of funeral brasses from early-fifteenth-century Cobham in Kent. My concern in this section is to consider how the Trinity is used as a legitimating device in two especially pointed cases, where a representation of and emphasis upon marriage are mobilized to settle other disputes and anxieties. I suggest in the conclusion the way that these final cases might be read as synecdoches of the bigger phenomenon that I describe here, of the use of Trinitarian theory and imagery to facilitate a wider improvement in the estimation of marriage.

1. *VESTIGIA TRINITATIS*: THE HISTORY AND TENACITY OF AN ANALOGY

John Mirk’s sermons, which were enduringly popular through the fifteenth century and into the age of print, offer a ready gauge of late-medieval lay cultural attitudes, and, of all the material considered in this article, they articulate the most uncomplicated use of the Trinitarian marriage topos.⁵ Mirk’s nuptial sermon, for example, addresses the question of why the Sarum marriage rite follows the Trinity Mass:

3e schul knowon þat þis ordur [the sacrament of marriage] was not furste fondon be ertþely man, bot be þe holy Trenite of Heuen; Fadur and Sone and Holy Gost made hit

³ D. W. Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (Princeton, N.J., 1962).

⁴ For a famous refutation of Robertson’s thesis see E. T. Donaldson, “Designing a Camel: Or Generalizing the Middle Ages,” *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 22 (1977), 1–16, esp. p. 13. Donaldson uses Langland’s *Piers Plowman* to contest the Robertsonian thesis that there was a ready and seamless acceptance of Augustine on *caritas* in medieval literature; I shall also use that poem, along with other evidence, to point up similar tensions.

⁵ See Susan Powell, “Mirk, John (fl. c.1382–c.1414),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, Sept. 2004), online at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18818> (accessed 30 June 2010).

in paradise erthely. . . . And for encheson þat þis ordur was made in þat mery place, ȝit holy chirch suffreth it to be made here in erthe wyth myrth þat is holy hymself, and wythoute vylony. Þan was it made þus: whan God hadde makud þis worlde and all þinge at hys wille þerin for man, þan, at þe laste, he makut man. So whan þat he was makud, he fond alle þing redy and buxum to hys honde. Þan sayde þe holy Trenite yfere þus: "Make we man lyk to vs in ymage!"⁶

It is perhaps not surprising to see the august force of Trinitarian doctrine brought in to dignify earthly marriage. Such justifications spoke, after all, to Mirk's audience, confirming that the decision to marry was sanctioned and supported by Christian doctrine.⁷

But less predictably Mirk returns to the same connections, and takes them further, in his sermon on Trinity Sunday, when such apologies are less required:

As þys Adam was formet of erþe on person, and Eue of Adam þe secunde person, and a mon of hom boþe þat was þe þryd person. Thys trinite was þus fonde yn man furste by worchyng of þe Trinite of Heuen. Wherfor þat man schulde haue mynde of þe Trynnye, holy chyrch ordeyneþe þat yn weddyng of mon and woman þat masse of þe Trinite ys songen.⁸

In these accounts Mirk infers connections that are far from explicit in the liturgical adjacency of marriage and the Trinity.⁹ Indeed, he squashes together separate conventions surrounding the import of Genesis for the institution of marriage. In the first quotation above Mirk rehearses the traditional idea that marriage was a prelapsarian institution; Augustine, for example, understood the creation of sexual difference and a companionate relationship between the sexes as the God-given gift of marriage.¹⁰ Mirk intertwines this notion with another that taxed scholars of Genesis: in what way were people made in the image of a Trinitarian God? John Mirk's paraphrase, "Make we man like to vs in image," preserves the first-person plural form found in the Genesis narrator's account (the Vulgate renders it "faciamus"), which prompted this speculation. The answers to this question in theological scholarship were vexed but did not usually constitute or contribute to a defense of marriage. Instead they considered what vestiges of the Trinity might still be apparent in the human being; these inquiries were, then, primarily Trinitarian and did not address marriage as a social institution.

In the second quotation above Mirk quotes John Belet out of context, using an association he found in the liturgist's discussion of the Office of the Dead and

⁶ John Mirk, *Mirk's Festial*, ed. Theodore Erbe, EETS ES 96 (London, 1905), p. 289. John Mirk's interest in the Trinity and the family is also discussed in relation to Langland's by Tavormina, "Kindly Similitude," p. 118, and by Galloway, "Intellectual Pregnancy," pp. 132–35.

⁷ For example, Mirk's *Festial* has been used by Beth Allison Barr to describe a "relatively bright" picture of laywomen's pastoral care: *The Pastoral Care of Women in Late Medieval England*, Gender in the Middle Ages 3 (Woodbridge, Eng., 2008), p. 3.

⁸ Mirk, *Mirk's Festial*, p. 164. On the incorporation of Trinitarian symbolism into medieval marriage rites see Tavormina, "Kindly Similitude," pp. 117–18.

⁹ "Post hec introductis illis in chorum ecclesie ad dexteram partem et statuta muliere ad dexteram uiri incipiat missa de sancta trinitate": *The Sarum Missal*, ed. J. Wickham Legg (Oxford, 1916), p. 416.

¹⁰ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 14.22, PL 36:429–30.

importing it into a discussion of marriage rites.¹¹ In this way he freely associates marriage with the Trinity, improvising around the idea that man, wife, and child are one flesh and yet three persons and that together they mirror the three indivisible persons of the Trinity. Mirk's idea is at once an innovation and a renovation. The analogy had a long heritage, which I shall discuss below, but more immediately prior pastoral discussions of marriage as a sacrament did not make the same use of it. The motif does not appear, for example, in vernacular penitential handbooks, like Robert Mannyng of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne* (c. 1275–c. 1338) and the text on which it was based, William Waddington's *Manuel des pechiez* (c. 1250–1300), even though they treat the questions of conduct within marriage and marriage as a sacrament; it is nowhere to be found in the consideration of the way in which man is made in God's image in *La lumere as lais* (c. 1270?), even though love is named there as the quality that demonstrates their similitude.¹² Even those discussions of marriage as a sacrament that had a more theological than pastoral emphasis—such as Hugh of St. Victor's *De sacramentis* or Peter Lombard's *Sententie*—omitted to treat the theme.¹³

Of course, it is hard to prove a negative in an extensive corpus, but the motif is at least not prominent in the marriage sermons in thirteenth-century *ad status* collections, even though they are engaged in reinforcing the theological and scriptural foundations of the married state.¹⁴ Robert de Sorbon (fl. 1250–74) in an unusual sermon on marriage, *De matrimonio*, refers to the Trinity in relation to the institution of marriage but does not make the connections that Mirk asserts, contenting himself with the more limited observation that marriage—which he imagines to be like a holy order—was instituted by a Trinitarian God, rather than an ordinary human being, such as Sts. Bernard or Benedict, as other orders were.¹⁵ This view posits no innate equivalency between the conjugal family and the Trinity. Robert mentions, too, the idea of man's being created in the image of a plural God and yet resists relating Adam, Eve, and their children to persons of the Trinity in the way that Mirk does. These associations, which as I shall show were certainly available, having long been part of theological Trinitarian inquiry, were not fully activated in lay culture and its attendant marriage debates until the middle of the fourteenth century, when it became newly fashionable to reflect on the apparent sympathies between weddedness and the Trinity.

¹¹ John Belet, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, PL 202:163A. For another discussion of how Mirk uses Belet here see Galloway, "Intellectual Pregnancy," p. 135.

¹² Robert Mannyng, *Robert of Brunne's "Handlyng Synne,"* ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, EETS OS 119 (London, 1901); *La lumere as lais*, ed. Glynn Hasketh, Anglo-Norman Text Society 54–58 (1996), 1:57.

¹³ Hugh of St. Victor, *Hugonis de Sancto Victore De sacramentis Christiane fidei*, ed. Rainer Berndt, Corpus Victorinum, Textus Historici 1 (Aschendorff, 2008); Peter Lombard, *Sententiarum libri quatuor*, PL 192. There is also no consideration of marriage in the first book on the Trinity.

¹⁴ See the descriptive survey presented in D. L. d'Avray and M. Tausche, "Marriage Sermons in *ad status* Collections of the Central Middle Ages," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 47 (1981), 197–209.

¹⁵ B. Hauréau, *Notices et extraits de quelques manuscrits latins de la Bibliothèque nationale*, 6 vols. (Paris, 1890), 1:189.

When St. Augustine confronts the topos in *De Trinitate*, his irritability signals that it was an unthinking commonplace.¹⁶ He objects, he says, not because of the embarrassingly visceral association made between the Trinity and “corporei conceptus partusque” (bodily conceptions and births)—there are both clean and dirty ways of thinking about the body—but on the authority of Scripture.¹⁷ Augustine’s reading of scriptural ordering is strict: man is made in the image of a plural God in Genesis 1.26; sexual difference is created in the next verse; and God’s procreative blessing is given in the one after that. Before the creation of woman, before the conception of children, man is made in the image of God, not a part or one person of God but a God who refers to himself in the plural. Adam is himself trifold rather than being an item in a triumvirate.¹⁸ Measured against those clarifications, Robert de Sorbon holds a line where John Mirk does not, stopping short of making man, wife, and child a map of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Augustine complicates this picture by still offering marriage and love—and it is explicitly a definition of love that includes sexual love—as vestigial traces through which the Trinity might, however partially, be understood. By doing so he substitutes a more dispersed set of associations between the Trinity and human intimacy than those that he had clearly rejected. He finds, for example, another trinity within the inner man that replicates a different trio in the Genesis narrative. The fruit was not eaten by either Adam or Eve in isolation; their eating was a collaborative transaction between them and the serpent.¹⁹ The psyche of each indivisible individual, Augustine argues, is made up of three integrated elements: the man and woman in rational wedlock (representatives respectively of contemplation and action) and the serpent (a representative of the sensuous soul). This argument incorporates the idea of marriage as a metaphor for inner connectivity. It is with this triangulated idea of interiority that Augustine contests a simplistic dualism that describes the body as feminine and the spirit as masculine. However, Augustine does not strive to map this contaminated trinity directly onto his three-in-one God.

Instead he finds other psychological triangles in human nature that imitate and declare the Trinity. There is better scriptural authority, Augustine says, for the psychological model of power, wisdom, and love. But, while those three attributes are particular to the respective persons of the Trinity, they are not exclusive to them. The Holy Spirit, then, is the love that exists *between* the other two persons of the Trinity, the element through which they lovingly commune and connect.²⁰ While the Holy Spirit alone is a special carrier of love, Augustine cites 1 John 4.8 (“Deus dilectio est”), stretching the attribute of love across all three

¹⁶ For the history of this idea before Augustine see Bertrand de Margerie, *The Christian Trinity in History*, trans. Edmund J. Fortman (Still River, Mass., 1982), pp. 274–76.

¹⁷ Augustine, *De Trinitate* 12.5, PL 42:1000. Hereafter quotations from this text will be noted by book, chapter, and column number.

¹⁸ Ibid. 12.6, 1001–3. Augustine does not refer explicitly to Adam, Eve, or their children by name, using instead the more generic *masculus/vir*, *femina/mulier*, and *proles* (12.5, 1000).

¹⁹ Ibid. 12.12, 1007.

²⁰ Ibid. 6.5, 928.

persons of the Trinity. Augustine still searches, then, for the signs of the Trinity in patterns of human intimacy:

Ecce tria sunt; amans, et quod amatur, et amor. Quid est ergo amor, nisi quaedam vita duo aliqua copulans, vel copulare appetens, amantem scilicet, et quod amatur? Et hoc etiam in externis carnalibusque amoribus ita est: sed ut aliquid purius et liquidius hauriamus, calcata carne ascendamus ad animum. Quid amat animus in amico, nisi animum? Et illic igitur tria sunt: amans, et quod amatur, et amor. Restat etiam hinc ascendere, et superius ista quaerere, quantum homini datur. Sed hic paululum requiescat intentio, non ut se jam existimet invenisse quod quaerit, sed sicut solet inveniri locus, ubi quaerendum est aliquid; nondum illud inventum est, sed jam inventum est ubi quaeratur: ita hoc dixisse suffecerit, ut tanquam ab articulo alicujus exordii caetera contextamus. (8.10, 960)

[Behold, then, there are three things: he that loves, and that which is loved, and love. What, then, is love, except a certain life which couples or seeks to couple together some two things, namely, him that loves, and that which is loved? And this is so even in outward and carnal loves. But that we may drink in something more pure and clear, let us tread down the flesh and ascend to the mind. What does the mind love in a friend except the mind? There, then, also are three things: he that loves, and that which is loved, and love. It remains to ascend also from hence, and to seek those things which are above, as far as is given to man. But here for a little while let our purpose rest, not that it may think itself to have found already what it seeks; but just as usually the place has first to be found where anything is to be sought, while the thing itself is not yet found, but we have only found already where to look for it; so let it suffice to have said thus much, that we may have, as it were, the hinge of some starting-point, whence to weave the rest of our discourse.]²¹

Augustine accepts that discussions of love will provoke thoughts of outward and carnal coupling, but he hopes that they will offer a starting point from which to climb a Platonic scale to God. Ideally, once these initiating thoughts have served that purpose, they will atrophy and fall away, enabling “higher” contemplative modes to flourish in their place. The phrase “copulare appetens” has a broad semantic spread, at once implying the bodily particularity of sexual intercourse and, at the same time, the abstract union of two indefinite objects. In this, his preferred analogy, Augustine does not dislocate the sexual body from God, proving his assertion that it is not the carnality of the reproductive family that disqualifies it as a reflection of the Trinity. The swirling circulations of unlocated *dilectio* or *caritas*—words that Augustine uses synonymously to render the New Testament’s ἀγάπη (*agápe*)—can just as clearly suggest carnality to the human mind. But they are also much more evidently a system of ideational signs for similar circulations between the persons of the Trinity, with none of the historicity and specificity that pertain to the family and the particular family in the story of Genesis.

²¹ Augustine, *On the Holy Trinity*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Arthur West Hadden, rev. William G. T. Shedd, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church Series 1, 14 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1887; repr. 1956), vol. 3. All English translations of this text will be from this translation.

Augustine was careful to point out that his preferred comparisons (of power, wisdom, and love; of the lover, the beloved, and love) were only semantic figures rather than true duplicates of God.²² While the practice of making the Trinity intelligible through comparison with things human is necessarily a retardant, and while he consequently urges that an attachment to those comparisons should not be carried for too long, Augustine allows that the making of analogies initiates a beneficial process of extrapolation. A picturesque imagining of unseen and unknown things makes them credible enough for the rational mind to love:

Sed ex qua rerum notarum similitudine vel comparatione credamus, quo etiam nondum notum Deum diligamus, hoc quaeritur. (8.5, 953)

[But the question is, from what likeness or comparison of known things can we believe, in order that we may love God, whom we do not yet know?]

The use of analogies in theology has always been vexed.²³ Although wary, Augustine cedes to the broad value of analogies as heuristic tools but rejects the specific analogy of the family for the Trinity because, for him, they are not justly similar things. Augustine's *De Trinitate* finds love both at the center of God and central to the process of finding God. The making of analogies is itself a process of loving communion. Explicitly in *De Trinitate*, love is the most central object of investigation:

Quapropter non est praecipue videndum in hac quaestione, quae de Trinitate nobis est, et de cognoscendo Deo, nisi quid sit vera dilectio, imo vero quid sit dilectio. Ea quippe *dilectio* dicenda est, quae vera est; alioquin *cupiditas* est: atque ita cupidi abusive dicuntur diligere, quemadmodum cupere abusive dicuntur qui diligunt. (8.7, 956; my emphasis)

[No other thing, then, is chiefly to be regarded in this inquiry, which we make concerning the Trinity and concerning knowing God, except what is true love, nay, rather what is love. For that is to be called *love* which is true, otherwise it is *desire*; and so those who desire are said improperly to love, just as they who love are said improperly to desire.]

Less interested here in the specifics of family and married life, Augustine is engaged in finding out the difference and the means of moving between *cupiditas* and *dilectio*. This preoccupation in Augustine's Trinitarian agenda was to prove influential in later mystical writing that similarly seeks to navigate from bodily to spiritual truths.²⁴

²² Robert Leitham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Philipsburg, N.J., 2001), pp. 197–98.

²³ Even latterly this is true and can be seen, for example, in the sectarian controversies surrounding the publication in 1932 of Erich Przywara's *Analogia entis*. See Joseph Palakeel, *The Use of Analogy in Theological Discourse: An Investigation in Ecumenical Perspective* (Rome, 1995).

²⁴ On the ways that Augustine's discussion of love was adapted in medieval theology by Richard of St. Victor in particular see Kilian McDonnell, *The Other Hand of God: The Holy Spirit as the Universal Touch and Goal* (Collegeville, Minn., 2003), pp. 26–27. Robertson argued that this Augustinian hierarchy between *cupiditas* and *caritas* was also harmoniously encoded in late-medieval art; see, for example, *A Preface to Chaucer*, p. 23. I shall show in the ensuing discussion the considerable friction that I think existed around medieval readings of Augustine on *caritas*.

It is sometimes thought that Augustine's rejection of the family analogy is overruled in medieval mysticism after Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173), who resurrects the motif in the face of Augustine's opposition.²⁵ Richard does indeed return to the idea of the first family as a potential image of the creating Trinity, but he does so in a very specific and, I think, not un-Augustinian way. Like Augustine, Richard also triangulates his discussion of love and looks for traces of the Trinity in patterns of human loving, but, again like Augustine, he separates off this discussion of *caritas* from his interest in the familial motif. Richard's was an idiosyncratic account of true love in the Trinity: love between two people, he said in book 3 of his *De Trinitate*, had to be shared with a third person in order to be fully *shared*.²⁶ But no particular analogue is produced for this ménage à trois. It is later, in a different discussion in book 6, that Richard turns to the subject of human conception, asking exactly how it might replicate the modes of procession in the Trinity. Finally he decides that human relatedness is alike in name but unlike in nature. The comparison of humanity and divinity, he says,

elucescit quidem nec dissimilitudo sine similitudine, nec similitudo sine dissimilitudine. Dissimilitudinis absque dubio est quod in nostra natura filius de solo patre procedere non potest. Similitudinis autem quod si hoc esse potuisset atque contingeret eadem germanitatis vocabula in simili germanitate singulis convenirent. (6.5, 971A–B)

[illuminates neither dissimilarity without similarity, nor similarity without dissimilarity. Without doubt there is dissimilarity because in our nature a son cannot be brought forth from a father alone. On the other hand, there is similarity because if this were possible and were achieved, the same relational (*germanitatis*) terms would have been fitting for a separate relational (*germanitate*) parallel.]

Richard is careful to qualify the similarities between human relations and those between the persons of the Trinity as linguistic rather than substantial; Scripture supplies an operative vocabulary of generation and filiation to describe what are ultimately unfathomable relationships between the divine persons. Richard keeps his discussion safely subjunctive. The noun *germanitas* can imply a very abstract kind of relatedness or be more specific, registering a sibling bond.

Just before this passage Richard considers the more specific example of the first family and its relation to the Trinity, and, in doing so, he takes his lead from Augustine. Before scrapping the family analogy, Augustine had salvaged one worthwhile part: the anomalous creation of Eve from the side of Adam.²⁷ Eve's

²⁵ Clopper, "Songes of rechelesnesse," pp. 118–19, esp. n. 29. But see for a qualification, Gallo-way, "Intellectual Pregnancy," pp. 129 and 134.

²⁶ Richard of St. Victor, *De Trinitate* 3.14, PL 196:924C–925A. This text will henceforth be cited by book, chapter, and column. On Trinitarian love in Richard of St. Victor see Leitham, *The Holy Trinity*, pp. 225–26.

²⁷ "In hujus igitur opinionis errore, hoc solum probabiliter affertur, quod in origine factae feminae, secundum sanctae Scripturae fidem satis ostenditur, non omne quod de aliqua persona ita existit, ut personam alteram faciat, filium posse dici; quandoquidem de viri persona existit persona mulieris, nec tamen ejus filia dicta est. Caetera sane ita sunt absurda, imo vero ita falsa, ut facillime redarguantur" (Augustine, *De Trinitate* 12.5, 1000; "In this erroneous opinion, then, the only point probably alleged, and indeed sufficiently shown according to the faith of the Holy Scripture, is this,—in the account of the original creation of the woman,—that what so comes into existence from some

creation offered an entry into the otherwise incredible creation of the Holy Spirit, which came forth from God but was not offspring. Richard also fixes on the irregular creation of Eve as a way to think about a kind of nascence that is not a parental engendering:

Notandum autem quod Eva immediate producta est de substantia Adae, non tamen, . . . secundum operationem naturae. Et inde est quod nec illa proles istius, nec iste dicitur parens illius. (6.2, 969B–C)

[It is to be noted, however, that Eve is brought forth immediately from the substance of Adam, not however, . . . according to the operation of nature. And thence because she is neither his offspring, nor is it said that he is her parent.]

Richard of St. Victor's use of the analogy observes Augustine's discomfort but is less defensive. As such it licenses a fuller and less fraught exploration of the familial analogy, albeit in its one and only application: to consider immediate and mediate conception, the conception of those things, like Eve, that came of one person and those things, like Abel (or Seth), that came of one person (Adam) through another (Eve) who was also of Adam. It was as part of a discussion of mediacy and immediacy of procession in the Trinity that the analogy was readmitted; this is how it figures in the battles around degrees of relation in the Trinity between Bonaventure (1221–74) and Aquinas (1225–74).²⁸ Both use the analogy to describe relation in the Trinity. But Aquinas, expressing the kind of queasiness about the body that Augustine had disavowed, shrank from the materiality of the comparison: “. . . licet hoc exemplum materialis processionis ineptum videatur ad significandam immaterialem processionem divinarum Personarum” (. . . although, indeed, this example of a material procession is inept to signify the immaterial procession of the divine persons).²⁹

In contrast to the restricted specificity around the use of the familial analogy, the discussion of love and the Trinity was made expansive and lent an avidity and heat to Neoplatonic mysticism like Bonaventure's. With none of Aquinas's distaste and like Augustine before them, Franciscan writers found in the amorous and reproductive body a place to begin the journey to God and to a transcendence of the flesh. And mystical *caritas* rarely excluded conjugal or parental love, appropriating the nuptial imagery of the Song of Songs and the familial language used by Christ in the Gospels. It was the emphasis upon *caritas* that gave parental and familial comparisons a way back into an affective association with

person as to make another person, cannot in every case be called a son; since the person of the woman came into existence from the person of the man, and yet she is not called his daughter. All the rest of this opinion is in truth so absurd, nay indeed so false, that it is most easy to refute it”).

²⁸ For an account of those struggles see Russell L. Friedman, “Divergent Traditions in Later-Medieval Trinitarian Theology: Relations, Emanation, and the Use of Philosophical Psychology, 1250–1325,” *Studia theologica* 53 (1999), 13–25, esp. pp. 17–18. The differences between Bonaventure's and Aquinas's use of the figure have also been discussed by Clopper, “*Songes of rechelessness*,” p. 119.

²⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica* 1.36.3, reply to objection 1, online at www.thelatinlibrary.com/aquinas/q1.36.shtml (accessed 12 November 2008). The English translation comes from www.newadvent.org/summa/1.htm (accessed 12 November 2008). Here I disagree that Aquinas takes up the same position as Augustine, as suggested by Margerie, *The Christian Trinity*, p. 278.

the doctrine of the Trinity. Thus, a popular association between the family and the Trinity, which had been forgotten and marginalized, came to look newly attractive to writers like William Langland, Julian of Norwich, and John Mirk, variously involved in a “vernacular contestation” over the “idea of holiness” (to borrow phrases from Lynn Staley and David Aers).³⁰ The differences between these three English writers’ use of the motif are instructive. Julian’s painstaking precision and Langland’s anxious redaction, as against John Mirk’s more approximate and unconflicted use of the analogy, expose the hard cultural work that had to be done in theologically literate quarters to consider the Trinity as in any way adjacent to particular human relationships. While John Mirk’s *Festial* ignores theoretical circumspection, Julian of Norwich and William Langland notably wrestle with the limits that had constricted the analogy. I suggest that, in their very different ways, Julian and Langland demonstrate a desire to explore the idea but, at the same time, a theological affiliation that prevents its full and easy assumption.

Mirk’s sense of the obviousness of the mimetic relationship between the first family and the Trinity expands and conflates, improvising around a theme in the way that embodied ceremony allowed its practitioners to do. The partition that was observed in Trinitarian writing after Augustine between the reproductive family and *caritas* was not thoroughly policed when the vehicle and tenor were switched, when the subject was no longer the Trinity but *caritas* between spouses. While Augustine insists in *De Trinitate* that the family and *caritas* are different subjects, in his defenses of marriage they are not similarly separated. In his marriage writings Augustine is clear that wedlock is triply ennobled: through *fides* (fidelity), *sacramentum* (sacrament), and *proles* (offspring).³¹ In this trinity of ways marriage was justified as a means by which *cupiditas* could be transformed into *caritas*. Augustine’s insistence on the power of marriage to transform cupidity into charity (in the literal sense that all sacraments were transformations) was instrumental in later defenses of marriage, which would bleed into the liturgical aestheticization of marriage making like John Mirk’s.³² Mirk’s sermons packaged for his secular audience a somewhat inexact synthesis of complex Trinitarian theology.

Julian’s visions of the Trinity scrupulously manage to include conjugal, parental, and filial loving even while they observe the curb placed on a simplistic association between the family and the Trinity. Like others before her, Julian wonders at the similitude between the human and a Trinitarian god: “And therefore the blissid Trinite enioyeth withouten end in the makynge of manys soule.”³³ When God opens her “gostly eye” so that she can see inside her own soul, nesting in

³⁰ Lynn Staley and David Aers, *The Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture* (Philadelphia, 2004), p. 4.

³¹ Augustine, *De bono conjugali* 24, PL 40:394, and *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1.17, PL 44:424.

³² On marriage as a sacrament in the later Middle Ages see Emma Lipton, *Affections of the Mind: The Politics of Sacramental Marriage in Late Medieval English Literature* (Notre Dame, Ind., 2007), pp. 4–9; and Christine Peters, “Gender, Sacrament and Ritual: The Making and Meaning of Marriage in Late Medieval and Early Modern England,” *Past and Present* 169 (2000), 63–96, at p. 75.

³³ Julian of Norwich, *A Revelation of Love* 67, ed. Marion Glasscoe, rev. ed. (Exeter, 1993), p. 110. Hereafter quotations from this text will be given by chapter and page number.

her heart, she sees a vision of the Trinity, not in part but whole, correctly discovering it as an indivisible unity (67, 109–10). Nonetheless, Julian is attached to the idea of the first two persons of the Trinity as parents: “I saw and vnderstod that the hey myte of the Trinite is our fader, and the depe wisdam of the Trinite is our moder, and the grete love of the Trinite is our lord; and al this have we in kynd and in our substantial makyng” (58, 94). Power, wisdom, and love, which make up Augustine’s psychological map of the Trinity, are combined with the social identities of father, mother, and lord.³⁴ Never too neat, Julian avoids casting the Holy Spirit as the offspring of the other two persons of the Trinity. Indeed, the lordship of the third aspect of the Trinity looks oddly dissimilar from the parental roles of the other two. And, although the Trinity engenders the human soul, none of its persons are cast as husbands or wives to each other in a way that overstretches the familial motif. Julian’s interest is in God’s parental keeping and caring for the human soul, rather than biological parenting. Just as Augustine said it should be, the human soul is an image of *love* in the Trinity, not a clue to Trinitarian procession and inception.

But even while complying with the limitations that had been placed around the analogy of the family, Julian’s special focus on love enables her to find in it a capacious potential, in particular authorizing a sensuous wonder at the motherhood of Christ. Throughout her visions Julian multiplies the ways in which the human soul relates to God. The emphasis on parenting describes the soul as God’s child, but Julian also variously makes the soul into a sibling, a lover, and a spouse. While familial and romantic relationships are kept separate in human law, they are not in Julian’s vision of the love between the soul and God. By collecting human love attachments of varying complexions (some more benign, others more ardent) and making them interchangeable and coincident, Julian thickens her description of divine love. This practice of proliferating and combining forms of human affection to portray divine tenderness was, of course, part of a much larger affective fashion in late-medieval piety.³⁵ From all these multiple forms of familial relatedness, Julian selects motherhood for special treatment and demonstrates both a sociological and also, even more urgently, a theological interest in mothering.³⁶

While mystical writing like Julian’s found in human fondness, in its different shapes and shades, a way of intensifying and aestheticizing the contemplative life, the same synergy was used for exactly the opposite purpose by writers like Mirk: to dignify the active life and forms of human affinity. The nuptial language from

³⁴ On the Augustinianism of Julian’s Trinitarianism see Denise Nowakowski Baker, *Julian of Norwich’s Shewings: From Vision to Book* (New York, 1997), esp. pp. 107–10; Nicholas Watson, “The Trinitarian Hermeneutic in Julian of Norwich’s *Revelation of Love*,” in *Julian of Norwich: A Book of Essays*, ed. Sandra J. McEntire (London, 1998), pp. 61–90, esp. pp. 66–67; and J. P. H. Clark, “Nature, Grace and the Trinity in Julian of Norwich,” *Downside Review* 100 (1982), 203–20, at pp. 204–5.

³⁵ Douglas Gray, *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Lyric* (London, 1972), pp. 18–19.

³⁶ On motherhood as a worldly theme in Julian’s work see Liz Herbert McAvoy, *Authority and the Female Body in the Writings of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe* (Cambridge, Eng., 2004), p. 69; on motherhood as a theological theme see Baker, *From Vision to Book*, chap. 5, esp. pp. 129–34.

the Song of Songs, which energized particularly Bernardine mysticism, was borrowed for marriage sermons and other defenses of lay conjugal life.³⁷ Mystical love slides between and makes transposable different kinds of human relatedness and does not always mark a separation between marriage and *caritas* in exactly the way that Trinitarian theory, which looked at the familial analogy head-on, does. Julian's *Shewings* characterizes a mystical inclination to move toward particular intimate bonds (in her case that between a mother and child) from a more diffuse, but permitted, emphasis on *caritas*.

Langland notably struggled with his Augustinianism when he approached these connections in Will's vision of the Tree of Charity and Abraham's sermon.³⁸ What is more, these sections of *Piers Plowman* are some of the most vigorously revised in the C text, indicating a significant unease about the associations that had been made in the poem's earlier, B-text recension. It has been suggested, by Teresa Tavormina and Lawrence Clopper, that Langland either did not know or defied the Augustinian restrictions around the familial analogy. Instead they both propose other influences and source material for the Trinitarian discussion of marriage in *Piers Plowman*.³⁹ While it is clear that *Piers Plowman* is indeed indebted to the alternative authorities that Tavormina and Clopper have discovered, I do not think that Langland's poem offers the all-out contradiction of Augustine that Tavormina and Clopper assume.

My position here is more like that of Andrew Galloway, who has argued that Langland's relationship to Augustine's "abstract psychology" is complicated by his "social awareness."⁴⁰ But the poet begins, I think, from a soundly Augustinian position. Less like Mirk and more like Julian, Langland is concerned from the outset to maintain and embellish the theme of charity.⁴¹ In both of the poem's B- and C-text recensions the dreamer asks for guidance on "charite."⁴² That request is met by a vision of a tree, which the B-text dreamer discovers "meneth" the Trinity (B 16.63) and which the C text asserts was planted ("sette") by the Trinity (C 18.9). On that tree are three fruits of charity—marriage, widowhood, and virginity. Neither version of the poem begins, as Mirk does, with

³⁷ E. Ann Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1990), p. 15.

³⁸ Tavormina, "Kindly Similitude," p. 117; Clopper, "*Songes of rechesnesse*," p. 118; Galloway, "Intellectual Pregnancy," pp. 133–34.

³⁹ Tavormina, "Kindly Similitude," p. 117, suggests Anselmian sources but also proposes that Langland is a reader of liturgy, rather like John Mirk; Clopper, "*Songes of rechesnesse*," p. 118, has argued convincingly for Langland's reading of Bonaventure and other Franciscan mystics.

⁴⁰ Galloway, "Intellectual Pregnancy," p. 133. Galloway's emphasis on pregnancy and feminine generativity is somewhat different from mine, however. The way that Trinitarian ideas intrude into Langland's social values is also explored by Alan Fletcher, "The Social Trinity of *Piers Plowman*," *Review of English Studies* 44 (1993), 343–61.

⁴¹ I disagree here with the assertion that the Trinity is not connected to the theme of charity in Langland's work, an argument made by Ben H. Smith, Jr., *Traditional Imagery of Charity in Piers Plowman*, *Studies in English Literature* 21 (The Hague, 1966), p. 67.

⁴² Quotations of the B text are taken from William Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, ed. A. V. C. Schmidt, new ed. (London, 1987), here 16.3. Quotations of the C text are taken from William Langland, *Piers Plowman, the C-Text*, ed. Derek Pearsall, corrected ed. (Exeter, 1994), here 18.2. Quotations are given by text, passus, and line number.

the relationship between marriage and the Trinity, but, rather, each moves toward it from a consideration of Trinitarian *caritas*. In the B text, marriage is for Langland what motherhood is for Julian: the human bond he would like to salvage from abstraction; his is a more difficult, even impossible, ambition, and this impossibility is acknowledged by radical excisions in the later C text. While marriage is picked out in relief in the B version of *Piers Plowman*, in C it is allowed to recede into the broader picture of “Trewe-loue,” here operating as the Middle English term for the Latin *caritas* like the Old English *soth lufu*. In the more careful C-text description of the tree other kinds of fruit are added to the three grades of chastity:

“The tree hatte Trewe-loue,” quod he, “the trinite hit sette;
 Thorw louely lokynges hit lyueth and launseth vp blosmes,
 The whiche blosmes buirnes Benigne-speche hit calleth.
 And þerof cometh a goed fruyt, þe whiche men calleth werkes
 Of holynesse, of hendenesse, of helpe-hym-þat-nedeth,
 The whiche is *Caritas* ykald, Cristes oun fode,
 And solaceth alle soules sorwful in purgatory.”

(C 18.9–15)

As well as the fruits of virginity, widowhood, and marriage, the fruit of civic philanthropy also ripens on the C-text tree, a tree that is understood to be “lovely” in both senses of that word: both beautiful and inspired by love. This lyrical amendment spreads the emphasis from sexuality to a broader idea of love, as the poem retreats to the safer association between the Trinity and *caritas*.

The devil’s stealing of the tree’s fruits initiates the poem’s chronological narrative of redemption.⁴³ Here *Piers Plowman* begins to follow the trajectory of Christian time, introducing the figure of Abraham, a representative of the Old Law and herald of the New Covenant. Abraham elaborates on the theme of the Trinity in relation to human intimacy. Abraham’s parallax is temporal: he lives before the virginal example of Christ and was enjoined to marry and procreate.⁴⁴ In both B and C, but especially in B, the use of the persona of Abraham forces the marriage card, discarding the other grades of chastity from the pack. In this part of Langland’s poem as well, the revisions that are made between the two later versions of the poem are instructive. While the B text improvises and decorates the links between the Trinity and the human sexual life, its fertile poetics mimicking the subject of fecundity, the C-text revisions prune and tidy up the B-text’s verdancy.⁴⁵ At the same time they sharpen the poem’s focus on the question of mediate and immediate conception in the first family, which, as I have noted, was *always* exempted from Augustine’s ban. In particular, unlike B, the C text names Adam, Eve, and Abel, making them into the representatives of the

⁴³ This narrative pattern has been most fully explored from this same starting point by Nicolette Zeeman, “*Piers Plowman*” and the Medieval Discourse of Desire, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 59 (Cambridge, Eng., 2006), esp. pp. 2–5.

⁴⁴ On Abraham’s limited perspective see Pearsall’s notes to the passage. On time in this part of the poem see David Aers, “*Piers Plowman*” and Christian Allegory (London, 1975), pp. 92–93.

⁴⁵ For an exploration of this theme of fecundity see Galloway, “Intellectual Pregnancy,” passim; for a discussion of the C-text’s tidying up see Tavormina, “Kindly Similitude,” p. 220.

man, wife, and child who are allowed to exist only as general categories in B. In this way Langland evokes the particularity of Eve's genesis and its difference from the sexual reproduction of Abel:

... in god, fader of heuene,
 Was þe sone in hymselfe in a *simile* as Eue
 Was, when god wolde oute of þe wey ydrawe.
 And as Abel of Adam and of his wyf Eue
 Sprang forth and spak, a spyer of hem tweyne,
 So oute of þe syre and þe sone þe seynt spirit of hem bothe
 Is and ay was and worþ withouten ende.

(C 18.227–33; Pearsall's emphasis)

Galloway reads this moment in the C text as theologically “novel,” suggesting that in the poem the Father assumes the “role of being pregnant with all that would come forth in history, starting with Eve, pregnant with all future pregnancies.”⁴⁶ But for the poet, as for Trinitarian theology after Augustine, Eve's coming forth does not prefigure future births; Eve is a “simile” of Adam, just as the Son is of the Father, but this is no precedent for their descendants.

Langland does not, as has been suggested, clearly infringe the limits of the matrimonial metaphor but instead, and most unmistakably in C, reworks its permitted parts. The poem's twin concerns, with the social and the theological, are not so easy to distinguish, and, in this way, *Piers Plowman* stands between the registers of Mirk's and Julian's works, combining metaphysics and ethics into a poem that is purely about neither. The poet attempts a Trinitarian defense of marriage, which had never been the force of the theological material with which he engages. In this way Langland's special interest in marriage disrupts his engagement with what Galloway describes as Augustine's “non-social psychology” but, I suggest, does not properly contradict it, rifling through its exclusions and complexities for alternative and permissible means, even to reach ends that had been expressly proscribed.⁴⁷

2. DOMESTICATING THE TRINITY: TEXT AND IMAGE

Extensively customized, books of hours gave their owners space to portray themselves in the act of devotion to their favorite saints and other holy figures.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Galloway, “Intellectual Pregnancy,” pp. 141–44. This argument depends, of course, on the definition of the term “pregnant,” which Galloway may be using figuratively, but Zeus would not be described as “pregnant” before Athena was born from his head. Remembering the anomalous conception of Eve, Langland certainly does not suggest that she develops in utero. Indeed, this ancient Greek parallel offers a challenge to Galloway's thesis about Langland's Trinitarian theology being “feminized.” In the Christian tradition from which Langland draws, as in the Greek myths, there are masculine ways of giving birth.

⁴⁷ Galloway, “Intellectual Pregnancy,” p. 137.

⁴⁸ For other discussions of kneeling donors in late-medieval manuscripts see Clare Sponsler, *Drama and Resistance: Bodies, Goods, and Theatricality in Late Medieval England*, Medieval Cultures 10 (Minneapolis, 1997), pp. 104–35; and Lucy Freeman Sandler, *Studies in Manuscript Illumination, 1200–1400* (London, 2008), p. 216.

Even old books could be personalized and updated with the inclusion of these pages.⁴⁹ Some patrons took a cautious approach, presenting themselves kneeling to as many different iconographic figures as would fit the book's design.⁵⁰ Others were more selective and deliberate in their choices. Books of hours participated in a fashion for the liturgical within the material life and routine of the late-medieval household, and Trinity iconography had a special part to play in that privatization and domestication of the liturgy. Nigel Morgan has accounted for the special use of the Trinity in images of married couples by noting that many of the deluxe books in which they are found were given as wedding presents; the allusion, he maintains, is to the use of the Trinity Mass in the nuptial rite.⁵¹ This direct reference to the Trinitarianism of nuptial ceremonies is paralleled, as I have already noted in my discussion of John Mirk's *Festial*, in texts that celebrated marriage and its associated rite. The later N-town play of the *Marriage of Mary and Joseph* also makes the same connection, incorporating a stage direction that specifies, "Et hic cantent 'Benedicta sit beata Trinitas.'"⁵²

The special popularity of the Trinity with kneeling couples or families in books of hours, books that have been firmly associated with lay, and particularly women's, domestic piety, is contiguous with a broader fashion for Trinitarian iconography in familial and household contexts in Europe in the late Middle Ages.⁵³ Sara Jane Pearman has suggested that alabaster Trinities were common household objects across northern Europe. She notes, for example, that the right wing of the Werl Altarpiece features a throne-of-grace Trinity on a chimney breast, in a domestic scene of St. Barbara reading.⁵⁴ François Boespflug has found this kind of Trinity image to be one of the "thèmes privilégiés" in European family tomb sculpture; many of his examples clearly borrow the design of Trinity and kneel-

⁴⁹ It has been suggested, for example, that the two illuminations of lay couples kneeling to the Virgin and Child and the Pietà on folios 9r and 10v in Oxford, Keble College, MS 47, were added later in the fourteenth century than the image of the couple who kneel to the Trinity on folio 13v. See Malcolm Parkes, *The Medieval Manuscripts of Keble College Oxford: A Descriptive Catalogue with Summary Descriptions of the Greek and Oriental Manuscripts* (London, 1979), p. 216.

⁵⁰ See, for example, the fourteenth-century Savoy Hours made for Blanche of Burgundy. A list of illuminations can be found in the catalogue in Roger S. Wieck, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (New York, 1988), pp. 171–225 (no. 11, pp. 176–78). For a discussion of the representation of Blanche in this book see Margaret M. Manion, "Women, Art and Devotion: Three French Fourteenth-Century Royal Prayer Books," in *The Art of the Book: Its Place in Medieval Worship*, ed. Margaret M. Manion and Bernard J. Muir (Exeter, 1998), pp. 21–66, at p. 32.

⁵¹ Nigel Morgan, "Patrons and Devotional Images in English Art of the International Gothic, c.1350–1450," in *Reading Texts and Images: Essays on Medieval and Renaissance Art and Patronage in Honour of Margaret M. Manion*, ed. Bernard J. Muir (Exeter, 2002), pp. 93–121, at p. 99.

⁵² Line 301a, ed. Douglas Sugano, in *The N-Town Plays* (Kalamazoo, Mich., 2007), p. 98.

⁵³ On women and books of hours see, for example, D. H. Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 65 (Cambridge, Eng., 2007), pp. 58 and 95; and Susan Groag Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture," in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Athens, Ga., 1988), pp. 149–87, at pp. 162–66.

⁵⁴ Sara Jane Pearman, "The Iconographic Development of the Cruciform Throne of Grace from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1974), p. 70.

ing figures familiar from manuscript art.⁵⁵ Throne-of-grace Trinities begin to appear on English family funerary monuments from around 1408; there are extant early-fifteenth-century examples from Kent, Cambridgeshire, and Oxfordshire and indents and palimpsests elsewhere.⁵⁶ The surviving sample suggests that these were in increasing demand through the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.⁵⁷ On the eve of the Reformation this design was one of the most popular in English mortuary art, and there may have been many more examples that did not survive early-modern iconoclasm.⁵⁸

The design starts out in manuscript illumination but traveled, presumably via illuminators' pattern books, into other media, taking on, in Nigel Ramsey's words, "a life of its own."⁵⁹ Typically in representations of kneeling couples and the Trinity the sexes are segregated. Many observe the principle of dextrality, which was used, among other things, to convey the gender asymmetry of the age; however, it is testament to the widespread female ownership of books of hours that many do not.⁶⁰ A man faces his wife, or sometimes successive wives, and their children line up behind them like Russian matryoshka dolls. A precocious example of this configuration of figures and the Trinity appears in the Douce Apocalypse made for Prince Edward, the soon-to-be Edward I, in the 1260s; the majority, however, are to be found in books of hours made for a lay audience from the mid-fourteenth through the fifteenth centuries.⁶¹ While the early examples are courtly

⁵⁵ François Bœspflug, "La Trinité à l'heure de la mort: Sur les motifs trinitaires en contexte funéraire à la fin du moyen âge (m. XIVe-déb. XVIe siècle)," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales* 8 (2001), 87–106, at p. 92.

⁵⁶ See the discussion of the Cobham brasses (c. 1409) in Kent in Section 4 below. There is another example at Hildersham, Cambridgeshire (1408). See also the indents at Ashby Saint Ledgers, Northamptonshire (1416); Burford, Oxfordshire (1437); and Brightwell Baldwin, Oxfordshire (1445). For images of all these see M. W. Norris, *Monumental Brasses: The Portfolio Plates of the Monumental Brass Society, 1894–1984* (Woodbridge, Eng., 1988), plates 107, 124, 157, and 168. On palimpsests see John Page-Phillips, *Palimpsests: The Backs of Monumental Brasses* (London, 1980), plates 19, 28, 30, 48, and 67.

⁵⁷ For these later examples see Norris, *Portfolio Plates*, plates 210, 251, 297, 305, 320, and 336; and Malcolm Norris, *Monumental Brasses: The Craft* (London, 1978), plates 66 and 267. On the changing fashions of effigial and iconographic funeral brass of this kind see Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480–1750* (Oxford, 1998), p. 346.

⁵⁸ See, for example, the list of icons removed from Gorleston, Great Yarmouth, by Francis Jessup in the early 1640s, including "four superstitious inscriptions in brass" and "thirteen superstitious brasses," cited in Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts, 1: Laws against Images* (Oxford, 1988), p. 76.

⁵⁹ Nigel Ramsey, "Artists, Craftsmen and Design in England, 1200–1400," in *The Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England, 1200–1400*, ed. Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski (London, 1987), pp. 49–54, at p. 51.

⁶⁰ Hugo Vander Velden, "Diptych Altarpieces and the Principles of Dextrality," in *Essays in Context: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych*, ed. John Oliver Hand and Ron Spronk (New Haven, Conn., 2006), pp. 124–55; James Hall, *The Sinister Side: How Left-Right Symbolism Shaped Western Art* (Oxford, 2008).

⁶¹ Nigel Morgan, *The Douce Apocalypse: Picturing the End of the World* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 6–7. It is also discussed in Nicolas Bock, "L'Ordre du Saint-Esprit au Droit Désir: Enluminure, cérémonial, et idéologie monarchique au XVe siècle," in *Art, cérémonial et liturgie au moyen âge: Actes du colloque de 3e cycle romand de lettres Lausanne-Fribourg, 24–25 mars, 14–15 avril, 12–13 mai 2000*, ed. Nicolas Bock, Peter Kurmann, Serena Romano, and Jean-Michel Spieser (Rome, 2002), pp. 415–61, at p. 433.

commissions, motivated by the need to validate monarchic power with ritual signs and dynastic claims (motivations that will be considered in more detail in Section 4 below), increasingly the same design appears in books and images produced for urban elites, articulating marriage as part of a pious civic identity.

This is how the design appears in Masaccio's famous 1427 Holy Trinity fresco in Santa Maria Novella, Florence. The patrician husband in this painting is presented in the red uniform of the *gonfaloniere* of justice—the highest Florentine civic office.⁶² Almost contemporaneous with Masaccio's fresco, but from the other side of Europe, the Bolton Hours from Yorkshire (c. 1405–20) similarly selects the Trinity for a special study of the conjugal family (Fig. 1).⁶³ This manuscript has, like the Masaccio painting, been identified as an expression of civic identity both on the evidence of its devotional emphases and its presentation of family values. Indeed, the Bolton Hours shows a pointed remonstrance with debates about sexual ethics, and its use of the Trinity needs to be considered within this context. In the manuscript, kneeling figures straddle the frames around a number of iconographic images. Patricia Cullum and Jeremy Goldberg have argued that the decision to couple an image of St. Sitha with a representation of an adolescent girl is a studied one, indeed evidence for the expectations about female service in the culture that produced the manuscript.⁶⁴

Felicity Riddy and Sarah Rees Jones have used the Bolton Hours and especially the choice to represent another young woman kneeling to Richard Scrope, martyred by Henry IV in 1405, as evidence for the embeddedness of the domestic realm in “the wider worlds of neighbourhood, town, and nation.”⁶⁵ They have situated the manuscript's representation of a whole family in veneration of the Trinity within a picture of urban politics at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Riddy and Rees Jones regard this as an image of household, which explicitly, in the text of a prayer, stresses sexual virtue. It is also, though, an image of the Trinity, of the Trinity within the virtuous family and urban household.⁶⁶ The Bolton Hours saves up the Trinity for a representation of the whole family group. It is possible that this choice reflects a personal familial devotion to the Trinity, a devotion like that to Richard Scrope or St. Sitha, but it was also a more widespread attachment. John Block Friedman has read the Bolton Hours' Trinity illumination as further evidence, along with decorated domestic utensils, for ex-

⁶² Eve Borsook, *The Mural Painters of Tuscany*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1980), p. 58. This painting's use of the Trinity is also considered by François Boespflug, *La Trinité dans l'art d'Occident, 1400–1460: Sept chefs d'œuvre de la peinture* (Strasbourg, 2000), plate 6.

⁶³ York, Minster Library, MS Additional 2, fol. 33r.

⁶⁴ Patricia Cullum and Jeremy Goldberg, “How Margaret Blackburn Taught Her Daughters: Reading Devotional Instruction in a Book of Hours,” in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al., *Medieval Women* 3 (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 217–36, at pp. 225–27. This manuscript is also discussed by Pamela King, “Corpus Christi Plays and the ‘Bolton Hours,’ 1: Tastes in Lay Piety and Patronage in Fifteenth-Century York,” *Medieval English Theatre* 18 (1996), 46–62.

⁶⁵ Felicity Riddy and Sarah Rees Jones, “The Bolton Hours of York: Female Domestic Piety and the Public Sphere,” in *Household, Women, and Christianities in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts* 14 (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 215–60, at p. 226.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

ample, for a household-based devotion to the Trinity in Yorkshire.⁶⁷ I suggest that this conclusion should be connected with the other art-historical evidence for an increasing gravitation across Europe toward the Trinity as a way of articulating a particular ideal of family and household.

The growing lay interest in this design testifies to the secular absorption of the theological emphasis upon *caritas* within elite fashions. However, it has been very clearly reconfigured to serve new purposes in communities committed to the ideological power of marriage. The early use of this design in the Douce Apocalypse connects it to the crusading millenarianism of the English royal family and aristocracy. It has been argued that apocalypses were also in fashion in the mid-thirteenth century because of the dissemination in Franciscan thought and preaching of the ideas of Joachim of Fiore (who had predicted that 1260 would be the end of days).⁶⁸ Nicolas Bock has proposed that the English, French, and Neapolitan royal families pursued personal devotions to the Trinity and the Holy Spirit because of a preoccupation with Joachite theology.⁶⁹ Joachim prophesied the imminence of a perfect age of the Holy Spirit, which would succeed the current age of the Son and the past age of the Father. Bock has noted that late-medieval pneumatology particularly stressed the relationship between the Holy Spirit and *caritas*.

Whatever the design of kneeling couple and Trinity, like the one in the Bolton Hours, might have owed to Joachite theology, it does not fully fit with his particular formulation of *caritas* and sexual ethics. Joachim's Trinitarian teleology was also a process of sexual purification: the age of the Father had been the age of marriage; the age of the Son was that of widowhood; and the age of the Holy Spirit would be the time of virginity.⁷⁰ The Bolton Hours' Trinity clearly alludes to marriedness and offers it in relation to the unity of the Trinity, rather than any of its three persons. Langland's Tree of Charity has also been compared with Joachite millenarian chronologies, which were, in Joachim's visionary *figurae*, drawn as branching arboreal forms.⁷¹ And yet, despite Langland's evident Franciscan affinities, there can be no direct Joachite correlation because Langland's tree does not, like Joachim's, tend toward and privilege the idea of virginity. Instead *Piers Plowman* offers up Abraham, a figure from the Old Testament past, as an authority both on sexual propriety and the Trinity, producing the accent upon marriage that his place in time necessitates. Like *Piers Plowman*, the Bolton Hours' design demonstrates a double interest in the Trinity and the family and does not figure the Trinity as a symbol for an impending age of virginity augured in by the Holy Spirit.

Instead, the use of the analogy in both image and text was an iteration of the *bona matrimonii*, or goods of marriage—*sacramentum*, *proles*, and *fides* (sacra-

⁶⁷ John Block Friedman, *Northern English Books, Owners, and Makers in the Late Middle Ages* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1995), p. 174.

⁶⁸ Morgan, *Douce Apocalypse*, p. 16.

⁶⁹ Bock, "L'Ordre du Saint-Esprit," p. 437.

⁷⁰ Marjorie Reeves and Beatrice Hirsch-Reich, *The Figurae of Joachim of Fiore* (Oxford, 1972), plates 12–19.

⁷¹ Morton W. Bloomfield, "Piers Plowman and the Three Grades of Chastity," *Anglia* 76 (1958), 227–53, esp. pp. 246–48 and plate 2.

ment, children, and faith)—which were first formulated by Augustine but extensively synthesized in medieval canon law.⁷² In their reference to the marriage ceremony these images invoke the sacred moment at which the union is forged; in this way they incorporate the Trinity into a fashion for sacramentalism in text and art.⁷³ The design in use in the Bolton Hours' Trinity shares a symbolic rhetoric with the discussion of sexual and reproductive propriety in Langland's *Piers Plowman*, disclosing an insistence upon canon law formulae. The scrupulous gendered segregation within these images is reminiscent of the dreamer's vision of the animals in Middle-Earth. The animals' instinct makes them sexually moderate, respectful of the rule of Reason; males and females move apart after coupling, and the poem observes this propriety by dividing them into different lines of verse:

Males drow hem to males a morwennyng by hemsulue,
And femeles to femeles ferddede and drowe.

(C 13.146–47)

Indeed, the animals instinctively enact the precepts of canon law (which set out a regimen for sexual coming together and moving apart), precepts that the dreamer regrets do not bind the human community. No doubt the same-sex groupings in these devotional illuminations also contain a statement about the adherence of sexually active parents to those same canon law principles. The prayer cartouches that unfurl from the figures' hands in the Bolton Hours' illumination ascribe different lines of a Trinitarian prayer to each family member.⁷⁴ Part of that prayer is that they be made chaste and honest, and it is the figure of the daughter who speaks this line, moving it away from the conjugal unit and the site of reproductive activity, which, as Riddy and Rees Jones note, articulates licit heterosexual desire.⁷⁵ In this way the family demonstrates the kind of restraint that reserves sex for the purposes of producing children.

But the lesson of Will's vision in *Piers Plowman* is not finally, as one might expect, about sexual propriety. Instead the poem fans out into a discussion of faith, which eventually culminates in the entry of Abraham, the personification of faith. Instead of corroborating the dreamer's pessimism about human sexuality, the poem comes to censure him for his own lack of faith, which is revealed in his perverse remonstrance with Reason. While the Bolton Hours' image, and others like it, claims a probity for the depicted family that is modeled by neither

⁷² Augustine, *De bono conjugali* 24.32, PL 40:394. *Fides* and *sacramentum* were extensively reformulated in medieval canon law after Aquinas. In particular *fides* was broadened to include fidelity to God and the church. See James Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago, 1987), pp. 92 and 433; and John Witte, Jr., and Eliza Ellison, eds., *Covenant Marriage in Comparative Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 2005), p. 125.

⁷³ Ann Eljenholm Nichols, *Seeable Signs: The Iconography of the Seven Sacraments, 1350–1544* (Woodbridge, Eng., 1994); Lipton, *Affections of the Mind* (above, n. 32), p. 2.

⁷⁴ For a discussion of speech scrolls in medieval illuminated books see Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, "Introduction," in Maidie Hilmo, *Medieval Images, Icons, and Illustrated English Literary Texts: From the Ruthwell Cross to the Ellesmere Chaucer* (Aldershot, Eng., 2004), pp. xix–xxv, at p. xxiv.

⁷⁵ Riddy and Rees Jones, "Female Domestic Piety," pp. 232–33.

Will nor the human society from which he is extracted, nonetheless there is a similar move in both poem and image to absorb sexuality into a picture or discussion of faith.

Most obviously, the icons with kneeling donors are expressions of faith. This sort of design, especially in the context of the book of hours, presented surrogate versions of the book's owners; they are perpetual emblems of their faith. The most improbable elements of Christian doctrine are most popularly and prominently offered in these images: the Trinity and the Virgin and Child. In medieval Christian dogma, it was the Trinity in particular that operated as a synecdoche for faith, being, for example, the subject of the Athanasian Creed and at the center of the Mass.⁷⁶ Augustine began his tract on the Trinity with an appeal to faith: "Lecturus haec quae de Trinitate disserimus, prius oportet ut noverit, stilum nostrum adversus eorum vigilare calumnias, qui fidei contemnentes initium, immaturo et perverso rationis amore falluntur" (The following dissertation concerning the Trinity, as the reader ought to be informed, has been written in order to guard against the sophistries of those who disdain to begin with faith and are deceived by a crude and perverse love of reason).⁷⁷ The Trinity was the most ineffable and difficult test of Christian faith.

The family who kneel to the Trinity in the Bolton Hours, and those depicted in comparable designs, are, unlike the dreamer of *Piers Plowman*, represented as people who begin with faith and who guard against sophistry in exactly the way that Augustine, and any number of church authorities after him, advised. Langland's B-text narrator is seen to have learned his lesson about the dangers of *curiositas* when he refrains from asking about the Trinity, having been checked by a look from Piers the Plowman in passus 16 of the B text.⁷⁸ For holding his tongue he is rewarded with instruction on the Trinitarian Tree of Charity and its three fruits of chastity: marriage, widowhood, and virginity. In time this lesson is commandeered by Faith himself, who embroiders the connections between the Trinity, marriage, and family.⁷⁹ While faith, for Langland as for Augustine, had a general use in that it could forestall overly curious inquiry into both human sexuality and God—and especially the difficult figure of a Trinitarian God—it also had a specific application as a means of contextualizing an actual sexual relationship, as one of the three goods of marriage. Sex, Augustine maintained in *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, for example—a text to which Langland alludes in Will's vision of Middle-Earth—was salutary only within a marriage of believers.⁸⁰ In adopting the Trinity as the icon for the conjugal family at prayer, pictorial de-

⁷⁶ On the significance and history of Trinitarianism in the late-medieval church see, for example, Pearman, "Iconographic Development," pp. 28–29 and 83–86.

⁷⁷ Augustine, *De Trinitate* 1.1, PL 42:819.

⁷⁸ This moment in the text is a starting point for another discussion of Langland and faith by Fletcher, "Social Trinity" (above, n. 40), p. 343.

⁷⁹ For a discussion of Abraham as himself a figure of the Trinity see Pamela Raabe, *Imitating God: The Allegory of Faith in "Piers Plowman"* B (Athens, Ga., 1990), pp. 45–48.

⁸⁰ Augustine, *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* 1.4, PL 44:416. This allusion in *Piers Plowman* is discussed in Isabel Davis, *Writing Masculinity in the Later Middle Ages*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 62 (Cambridge, Eng., 2007), pp. 35–37.

signs offered up the biggest expression of Christian faith as part of an account of conjugality, using that expression of faith in its specific application as a “good” of marriage.

What is more, faith was itself a kind of family. Mirk’s *Festial* insists that it is a belief specifically in the Trinity that qualifies the believer to become part of the Christian family, making a community of Christians who could count themselves within the genealogy of Christ:

... 3e schull beleue þat here ben þre persons and on God yn Trynyte. . . . Wherfor he þat byleueth and doth þe werkes of þe byleue wythout dowte, he schall be sauet; and he þat beleueth not, he schall be dampnet. The werkes of þe byleue byn mekenes and charyte. For wythout þes two schall þer no man be sauet; and he þat hath þes two, he ys wrytten yn þe geanology of Cryst. Wherfor, yn wytnes of pys geanology þat ys red yn mydwyntyry-nyght, begynnyth aboue at Abraham, and so comyth downe to Ioseph, and soo to oure lady Mary, in schouyng þat ys most mekest of hert, ys next to oure Lorde; and seche he auanset. And þerfor þe geanology þat ys red this nyght, begynnyth at Ihesu Cryst, and goth vp to Adam, and so ynto God, yn schewyng þat he þat hath perfyte loue to hys eme-crysten, ys wrytten yn þe geanologe of God yn Heuen; and schall be as cosyn and dere derlyng to God þer wythouten ende.⁸¹

This thinking comes, of course, from St. Paul, who, although he stressed his own Jewishness and authenticity, made entry into the new religion dependent not upon race and blood relatedness but instead upon faith. Christ’s universal blood related the Pauline community as the apostle consistently played down the significance of biological affinity in favor of a millenarian emphasis upon Christ’s sexual asceticism. The sacraments constituted the arterial structure for the faith community; it was through them that Christ’s blood flowed. The poetry of Christianity regularly relied on the earthly denial of the familial and domestic: on the sacrifice of the son and the homelessness of Christ. Families depicted kneeling in prayer to iconographic representations of the most difficult bits of Christian doctrine were, then, represented as families as much because of their identical prayerful poses as because of any suggestion of the blood or marriage ties that the individuals in that family might have shared. In images of the throne-of-grace Trinity, more specifically, devotion to the bleeding crucifix stressed the sacramental participation of marriage in the Christological corporation.⁸²

The conjugal family is, then, a part of a larger social *caritas*; it participated in, but also physically reproduced, a society affined to Christ. As Abraham puts it in the B text of *Piers Plowman*:

So God, that gynnyng hadde nevere, but tho hym good thoughte,
Sente forth his sone as for servaunt that tyme,
To ocupien hym here til issue were spronge—
That is, children of charite, and Holi Chirche the moder.
Patriarkes and prophetes and apostles were the children,
And Crist and Cristendom and alle Cristene Holy Chirche
In menyng that man moste on o God bileve,

⁸¹ Mirk, *Mirk’s Festial*, pp. 51–52.

⁸² Peters, “Gender, Sacrament and Ritual” (above, n. 32), pp. 75–77; Eric P. Baker, “The Sacraments and the Passion in Medieval Art,” *Burlington Magazine* 66 (1935), 81–89.

And there hym likede and lovede, in thre leodes hym shewede.
 And that it may be so and sooth sheweth it manhode:
 Wedlok and widwehode with virginite ynempned,
 In tokenynge of the Trinite was taken out of o man—
 Adam, oure alle fader; Eve was of hymselfe,
 And the issue that thei hadde it was of hem bothe,
 And either is otheres joye in thre sondry persones,
 And in hevene and here oon singuler name.
 And thus is mankynde and manhede of matrimoyne yspronge,
 And bitokneth the Trinite and trewe bileve.

(B 16.194–210)

Images like the one in the Bolton Hours represented procession in the Trinity (the Father holds the Son before him, and the Holy Spirit hovers between them both) and framed it with a representation of family, which also stressed descent and progeny.⁸³ Langland, in this quotation, compares reproductive marriage with a Father God and also with Adam, within whose rib Eve and their children inhered. Both poem and image unpack nestling genealogies in man and God, offering them, as the C text of *Piers Plowman* suggests, as *simile(s)* (C 18.228). The poem's B text makes marriage the sign of Trinitarian faith and offers it in parallel to God's engendering of Christendom through Christ. Biological and spiritual reproduction, in tandem, form the faith community. I think the same mutuality is presented in images like that from the Bolton Hours, which similarly knots up biological and spiritual ties in its portrait of familial trust by articulating a careful combination of the *bona matrimonii*. Images of the throne-of-grace Trinity offered a way to think about the relationship of parents to children, about fidelity and the sacredness of the marriage rite. Incorporating kneeling couples and segregating men from women in representations of the Trinity enabled a triangular *mise-en-page* that bound a picture of family neatly into the imperatives of Trinitarian iconographic design.

3. TRINITARIAN CARITAS: READINGS OF THE *ROMAN DE LA ROSE*

The subject of marriage in late-fourteenth-century English literature is interestingly entangled with Jean de Meun's continuation of the *Roman de la rose*. Both John Gower and Geoffrey Chaucer use the French poem explicitly in their discussions of marriage, even though marriage had neither been as prominent nor as positive a concern in the *Rose* itself. I, and others before me, have also considered *Piers Plowman* in relation to the *Roman de la rose*, suggesting it as "precocious within a coming culture of *Rose* critique and reassessment."⁸⁴ Indeed, an English literary preoccupation with marriage (which is displayed in *Piers Plow-*

⁸³ Sheingorn, "Appropriating the Holy Kinship" (above, n. 1), p. 296, has seen in the Holy Trinity an agnatic representation of family.

⁸⁴ Isabel Davis, "*Piers Plowman* and the *Querelle* of the *Rose*: Marriage, *Caritas* and the Peacock's 'Pennies,'" *New Medieval Literatures* 10 (2009), 49–86; Dorothy L. Owen, "*Piers Plowman*": *A Comparison with Some Earlier and Contemporary French Allegories* (London, 1912), pp. 21–22 and 27; Gillian Rudd, *Managing Language in "Piers Plowman"*, *Piers Plowman Studies* 9 (Wood-

man as much as in *The Canterbury Tales* or the *Confessio Amantis*) anticipated, if not informed, the French *querelle* of the Rose, in which marriage was also an interpolated and amplified subject.

In this section I shall consider late-fourteenth- and early-fifteenth-century French readings of the *Roman de la rose*. I hold, though, that these readings are closely associated with English discussions of marriage from the same period. French authors, like their English counterparts, made a special example of marriage in an engagement with Trinitarian *caritas*. In the *Rose* itself Trinitarian ideas were an unaccented part of a broader discussion of *caritas*; later readings of the *Rose*, on the other hand, made of the Trinity a special hook upon which *caritas* was hung. Further, these readings regularly selected marriage as a particularized extension of the discussion of *caritas* initiated by the poem. I shall begin by thinking about the *querelle* proper but shall move to engage, as the correspondents in the *querelle* did, with the schemes of illumination in some *Rose* manuscripts.

In his *Traité contre le Roman de la rose*, Jean Gerson attempts to model the proper application of allegory for Christian purpose as part of an attack on Jean de Meun's continuation of the *Roman de la rose*. In the *Traité* Gerson imagines that his heart separates from his body and journeys to the celestial court of Christian conscience where the testimony of various allegories is heard in the trial of Fol Amoureux—a version of the narrator of the *Roman de la rose*—brought by the plaintiff, Chastity. The *Traité* ends with the return of the heart to the body:

Eloquence ot fenie quant je n'aperceu l'eure que mon cuer ravola come il estoit voley; et sans riens oïr de la sentence, je me trovay en mon estude a la vespree, l'an de grace .mil IIII^c. et .ii., le .xviii^e. jour de may. La trovay bien aultre matiere pour mon cuer occuper, que plus ne fust ainsy volage: et fu la matiere de la Benoite Trinité en unité divine et simple, puis du Saint Sacremant de l'autel, etc.

[As Eloquence ended this oration, I heard the hour strike, at which my heart flew back again to its first state. And, hearing nothing of the judgment, I was in my library at Vespers. In the year of grace 1402, May 18. There I took up another matter in order to occupy my heart so that it might not be so likely to take flight. And the material was concerned with the blessed Trinity in divine Unity and Simplicity. Next with the holy Sacrament of the Altar, etc.]⁸⁵

Gerson's regular intervention in Trinitarian debates suggests that his reading patterns were not dissimilar to those that he claims for himself here.⁸⁶ In a later

bridge, Eng., 1994), pp. 45–52; Hugh White, *Nature and Salvation in "Piers Plowman,"* *Piers Plowman Studies* 6 (Woodbridge, Eng., 1988), pp. 65–67.

⁸⁵ *Le débat sur le "Roman de la rose,"* ed. Eric Hicks (Paris, 1977), p. 87. The English translation is from *La querelle de la Rose: Letters and Documents*, ed. and trans. Joseph L. Baird and John R. Kane, *North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures* 199 (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1978), pp. 90–91.

⁸⁶ On Gerson's interest in the Trinity see, for example, Isabel Iribarren, "The Trinitarian Controversy between Durandus of St Pourçain and the Dominican Order in the Early Fourteenth Century: The Limits of Theological Dissent" (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2001), p. 28; and Robert Mills, "Jesus as Monster," in *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, ed. Robert Mills and Bettina Bildhauer (Cardiff, 2003), pp. 28–54, at p. 45.

letter Gerson was to recommend that, instead of the *Rose*, Pierre Col read Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, a Trinitarian tract on mystical loving.⁸⁷ And, in the quotation above, he also makes a study of the Trinity into a reaction against the *Rose*. Along with Bonaventure's tract, Gerson also prescribes Augustine's defense of marriage, *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*; together they will counter the unhealthy sexual attitudes put out by the *Rose*. The date in the description from the *Traité* above gives a temporal setting just as the study offers a physical location, fixing it just days before Trinity Sunday. Of course, Gerson may really have finished his *Traité* on this day. But this date is also too symbolically coincident to go unspecified in Gerson's allegory about the importance of Christian doctrine in determining questions of sexual virtue. The subject and study of the Trinity are produced here as the anchor for a heart whose flighty errancy wings close to cupidity.

Pierre Col, responding to a letter by Christine de Pizan, mentions Gerson's *Traité* and confirms the deep relevance of the Trinity for their *querelle*:

Or en verité je cuide congnoistre la persone qui celle plaidoierie a compilee, et me doubte qu'il ne parle de Fol Amoureux come clerc d'armes, et ne li desplaie: car par ma foy je tiens qu'ainsy come il meismes, quant il prescha en Greve le jour de la Trinité, dist que icelle Trinité nous veons et cognoissons en ombre et come par ung mirouer, ainssy voit, entent et parle d'ung fol amoureux; car je panse qu'il ne le fut onques, ne n'y ot onques pensee: en tant que je oseroie dire qu'il contoit mieulx la Trinité qu'il ne fait Fol Amoureux, aussi y a il plus pansé.

[Now, in truth, I believe I know the one who composed this Complaint, and doubtless he speaks as a clergyman, begging his pardon, about the Foolish Lover. By my faith, I fully share the belief which he expressed when, preaching solemnly on the Day of the Trinity, he said that we can see and know the Trinity only in part and in a mirror darkly. This is the way that he sees, understands, and speaks of a foolish lover, for I think that he never was one, or had even thought of such matters, so much so that I dare say he could render better account of the Trinity, which he has thought about more, than he does of the Foolish Lover.]⁸⁸

Col understands the ending of Gerson's *Traité* as a description of its author in the act of preparing for his sermon on the coming Sunday, Trinity Sunday. Col must then have known Gerson's 1402 Trinity Sunday sermon, which took as its text 1 Corinthians 13.12: "Videmus nunc per speculum in enigmate tunc autem facie ad faciem" (We see now through a glass in a dark manner but then face to face).⁸⁹ The rest of the Corinthians chapter insists on the preeminence of *agápe*—love or charity. It is on a reading of this chapter that Augustine balances his Trinitarian discussion of analogy, using the mirror motif to describe the way that human intimacy gives a present but partial glimpse of true love in the Trinity. Of course, Col's tone here is sardonic: Gerson knows less about worldly love than about the Trinity, that most notoriously obscure and unknowable of things.

⁸⁷ *Le débat*, ed. Hicks, p. 172; *La querelle*, ed. and trans. Baird and Kane, p. 151.

⁸⁸ *Le débat*, ed. Hicks, pp. 91–92; *La querelle*, ed. and trans. Baird and Kane, p. 95.

⁸⁹ For a discussion of Gerson's 1402 Trinity sermon see D. Catherine Brown, *Pastor and Laity in the Theology of Jean Gerson* (Cambridge, Eng., 1987), pp. 26 and 193.

Gerson and Col do agree on one thing: that the Trinity, the perfect form of right loving, is a counterpoint to Fol Amoureux, to cupidity. But Col, unlike Gerson, understands the *Rose* to be observant and respectful of this juxtaposition:

Veulliés luy donques pardonner, vous, dame Justice Canonique, Raison, Eloquence, Conscience et les autres barons de la court sainte Crestienté, et luy commender en penitance de ce forfait que il lise tout au lonc et au ley et a loisir ce tres noble livre de la *Rose* trois fois en l'honneur de celle Benoite Trinitey en unité; laquelle nous ottroit a tous toison si blanche que nous puissions, avec le dit de Meung, brouter de herbes qui sont ou parc a l'aiglelet saillant. Amen.

[Deign to pardon him then, Lady Canonical Justice, Reason, Eloquence, Conscience, and the other barons of the Holy Court of Christianity, and impose on him as penance for his offence, that he read in its entirety and without haste this most noble book of the *Rose*, three times in honor of the blessed Trinity in unity. And may the Trinity grant us all a fleece so white that we may, with the said de Meun, crop the grass which grows in the park of the little gamboling lamb. Amen.]⁹⁰

Gerson's allegories are asked by Col to judge their own author, rather than Fol Amoureux, and to sentence him to a triple reading of the *Rose*, substituting a different kind of Trinitarian reading for that which Gerson says he takes up to settle his capricious heart. In his closing prayer here Col draws on the Trinitarian elements of the *Rose* itself. In particular he alludes to Genius's sermon in which the Park of the Trinity, a vision of heavenly paradise, is offered as an antithesis to Guillaume de Lorris's Jardin de Deduit. All the elements of the garden described in Guillaume's initial conceit are matched and contrasted with a corresponding but triune figure in Genius's description of the park.⁹¹ For example, while the spring of Narcissus in the garden "sort . . . a granz ondes / par deus doiz creuses et profondes" (20395–96; "gushes out . . . through two deeply hollowed channels"), the spring in the park "rant tourjorz par .III." (20439; "wells up continually through three") and

. . . sunt si pres a pres chascune
que toutes s'assamblent a une
si que, quant toutes les verroiz,
et une et .III. an trouverroiz
s'ous voulez au conter esbatre.

(20441–45)

[These are so close together that they all become one, and if you see them all and choose to amuse yourself by counting them, you will find them both one and three.]⁹²

⁹⁰ *Le débat*, ed. Hicks, p. 112; *La querelle*, ed. and trans. Baird and Kane, pp. 114–15.

⁹¹ On Trinitarianism in the park see the note to lines 19119–90 in Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, ed. and trans. Charles Dahlberg (Princeton, N.J., 1971), pp. 414–15.

⁹² All quotations from the *Roman de la rose* are cited in the text by line number from Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le roman de la rose*, ed. Félix Lecoy, 3 vols. (Paris, 1966). All quotations in English translation are cited by page number from Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, ed. and trans. Frances Horgan (Oxford, 1994).

In singling out this episode, Col asserts his regular reading of Jean de Meun's part of the *Roman de la rose*—that it is an anti-Rose, contradicting and satirizing the erotic follies of the work he continued:

Comment pouoit il mieus monstrier qu'il n'estoit pas fol amoureux et qu'il amoit Raison que en blasment le vergier Deduit et les choses qui y sont, et en louant Raison et mettant ung aultre parc (ung autre parc ou vergier), ouquel il figure si notablement la Trinitey et l'Incarnacion par l'escharboucle et par l'olive qui prant son accroissement de la rousee de la fontainne, etc.?

[How could he show better that he was not a foolish lover and that he loved Reason than by blaming the Garden of Delight and the things that are in it; and by praising Reason and by putting another part in the Garden in which he depicts so nobly the Trinity and the Incarnation by the carbuncle and the olive tree which takes its growth from the dew of the fountain, etc.]⁹³

The problem with this reading, for Jean de Meun's detractors, is that it conflates Genius and Jean de Meun himself; the things that Genius praises and blames are attributed by Col to the poem's homiletic voice. Col locates the author's message in Genius's sermon in order to contradict a similar, although more knowing, collation of author and character in Gerson's decision to make Fol Amoureux, on trial in the *Traité*, not only a version of the Rose's dreamer-narrator but also an avatar of Jean de Meun himself. Col complains that Jean's critics do not understand the difference between a persona and an author, and yet, as Christine de Pizan retorts, Col is nonetheless willing to cast Jean's characters as authorial alter egos when it suits the argument.

While entry to Genius's park is restricted to those who practice sex virtuously and follow Nature's laws (20597), that is not restrictive enough for Christine de Pizan and Gerson, who want the poem to rehearse the injunctions given on human sexuality in canon law and to bar those who do not adhere.⁹⁴ Gerson and Christine offer slightly different emphases from each other, weighting their preferences in ways that reflect their social subject-positions.⁹⁵ The sexual status of Chastity, in Gerson's *Traité*, is not specified; although she speaks up for marriage, she also defends young men dedicated to the religious, celibate life to which she is especially dedicated.⁹⁶ Gerson equitably considers all the forms of chastity, viewing the Rose as an affront to each.⁹⁷ This fits with Gerson's knowledge and interest in the theory of *caritas*, a theory that had always privileged a general idea rather than any particular earthly bond.

⁹³ *Le débat*, ed. Hicks, pp. 94–95; *La querelle*, ed. and trans. Baird and Kane, p. 98.

⁹⁴ Tellingly this relaxed-door policy has also disrupted the readings of critics who would like to see this park as part of the “le message et sa morale” of a Christian poem: Gérard Paré, *Les idées et les lettres au XIIIe siècle: Le roman de la rose*, Bibliothèque de la Philosophie 1 (Montreal, 1947), pp. 279, 291–96, and esp. 325.

⁹⁵ On Christine de Pizan's careful positioning of herself as female clerk in the *querelle* see Kevin Brownlee, “Discourses of Self: Christine de Pizan and the *Romance of the Rose*,” in *Rethinking the “Romance of the Rose”*: Text, Image, Reception, ed. Kevin Brownlee and Sylvia Huot (Philadelphia, 1992), pp. 234–62, at pp. 250–59.

⁹⁶ *Le débat*, ed. Hicks, p. 61; *La querelle*, ed. and trans. Baird and Kane, p. 72.

⁹⁷ See, for example, *Le débat*, ed. Hicks, p. 184; *La querelle*, ed. and trans. Baird and Kane, p. 168.

Christine de Pizan, in contrast, is particularly invested in marriage and would like the poem to include the case for marriage and to specify that the paradisaical park is reserved for married people. Defending the poem's virtue, Col argues that the positive case for marriage is written implicitly in Genius's insistence on practicing sex "bonnement" (virtuously); although the *Rose* does not expressly say it, marriage, Col asserts, "est ce que dit maistre Jehan de Meung" (is Jean de Meun's point).⁹⁸ He also contends that a defense of marriage is written explicitly in the advice of La Vieille. But because La Vieille is so discredited, Col somewhat unconvincingly locates the promarriage agenda that Christine de Pizan misses in Jean's poem. Col could instead have argued that marriage as a social function was never a part of scholarly Trinitarian thinking and that the description of the park emerges from a "non-social psychology" in Christian philosophy that considers desire and love (even sexual desire and love) but not how they should be practically organized into relationships in the world.⁹⁹

However, neither the *Roman de la rose* as a whole nor even Genius's sermon is uncomplicatedly part of the Trinitarian debate I have outlined. As ever, Jean de Meun entwines literary and philosophical traditions and avoids a transparent engagement with any particular one of them. After all, the park of the Trinity owes as much to the way that Alan of Lille embedded Christian doctrine in literary allegory as it does to Augustine's consideration of *caritas* in *De Trinitate*. In *De planctu Naturae* three jewels outshine the others in Nature's diadem.¹⁰⁰ These luminous and reflective surfaces shimmer, too, in Genius's park, where, from a stream, a single carbuncle with three facets shines out in contradistinction to the two crystals (found in the spring of Narcissus) in which the dreamer sees his first glimpse of the rose in Guillaume de Lorris's description of the Jardin de Deduit. But, in spite of Genius's park, the *Roman de la rose* is not primarily interested in the Trinity, and the poem's discussion of desire is not theologically heuristic but, rather, one of its main topics.¹⁰¹ Indeed, the *Rose* shares with Alan's *De planctu* an interest in queerness and straightness, and the connection between *caritas* and the Trinity is, in Genius's park, made to serve that interest.¹⁰² Jean de Meun does not borrow a defense of marriage from Alan or Augustine to combine with his interest in their Trinitarianism.

⁹⁸ *Le débat*, ed. Hicks, p. 107; *La querelle*, ed. and trans. Baird and Kane, p. 110.

⁹⁹ The quotation is Galloway's description of Augustine's Trinitarian analogies: "Intellectual Pregnancy," p. 137.

¹⁰⁰ Alan of Lille, *De planctu Naturae*, prosa 1, PL 210:433C.

¹⁰¹ George D. Economou has seen this as a contrast between Jean de Meun's "allegories of love" and Alan of Lille's "allegories of doctrine": *The Goddess Natura in Medieval Literature* (Notre Dame, Ind., 2002), pp. 102–3.

¹⁰² For other comparisons between the representations of sexuality in Jean de Meun and Alan of Lille see Sarah Kay, "Sexual Knowledge: The Once and Future Texts of the *Romance of the Rose*," in *Textuality and Sexuality: Reading Theories and Practices*, ed. Judith Still and Michael Worton (Manchester, Eng., 1993), pp. 69–83, at p. 72; and Mark D. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (Chicago, 1997), pp. 67–91. For a concise survey of the literature on the queerness of the *Roman de la rose* see Masha Raskolnikov, "Between Men, Mourning: Authorship, Love, and the Gift in the *Roman de la rose*," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 10 (2003), 47–75, at pp. 50–53.

It is telling that Pierre Col wants to recover a recommendation to marry from Jean de Meun's misogynist poem, telling about early-fifteenth-century culture and an emerging consensus about the ethical necessity and centrality of marriage. He does not deny Christine de Pizan's worldview but, instead, contests her sense of the poem's multivocality. While she complains that the poem is like an alchemist's book—open to multiple interpretations, which are finally fruitless—he believes that the *Rose* rests on Genius's image of the Trinitarian park as his prayer suggests: "laquelle nous ottroit a tous toison si blanche que nous puissions, avec le dit de Meung, brouter de herbes qui sont ou parc a l'aiglelet saillant. Amen" (And may the Trinity grant us all a fleece so white that we may, with the said de Meun, crop the grass which grows in the park of the little gamboling lamb. Amen).¹⁰³ But this image of the *Rose*'s readers—or perhaps more specifically Col himself, Gerson, and his addressee, Christine—as sheep eating grass is as bathetic as it is in Genius's sermon, where it is suspiciously close to irony. While modern readers might not share their urge to censor, Jean de Meun's fifteenth-century detractors are surely right to identify the moral subversion in the motley opinions expressed both by Genius and the rest of the *Rose*'s heterogeneous cast of personifications, a subversion that makes Genius's park a difficult place in which to find rest.¹⁰⁴

One of the main arguments in favor of the *Rose*'s being an essentially moral work has always been—both in the fifteenth century and more recently—that it is closely associated with a number of other more didactic and devout poems, poems that were attributed in the Middle Ages to Jean de Meun and that regularly appear in the same manuscripts.¹⁰⁵ Gontier Col, for example, rushed off an uncorrected copy of the so-called *Tresor* (a poem that catalogues episodes in the life of Christ as seven articles of faith) to Christine de Pizan in an effort to secure a speedy recantation of her complaints against the *Rose*.¹⁰⁶ More recently a similar view has been expressed by John Fleming, who finds it implausible that a text that was perceived in the Middle Ages as morally "kaleidoscopic" could have shared codex space with much more straightforward poems.¹⁰⁷ In particular, Jean

¹⁰³ *Le débat*, ed. Hicks, p. 112; *La querelle*, ed. and trans. Baird and Kane, pp. 114–15.

¹⁰⁴ On the urge to censor see, for example, David Hult, "Words and Deeds: Jean de Meun's *Romance of the Rose* and the Hermeneutics of Censorship," *New Literary History* 28 (1997), 345–66; and Sheila Delany, "'Mothers to Think Back Through': Who Are They? The Ambiguous Example of Christine de Pizan," in *Medieval Texts and Contemporary Readers*, ed. Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Shichtman (Ithaca, N.Y., 1987), pp. 177–200, at p. 192. Here I argue against the view, asserted by Jean de Meun's fifteenth-century defenders, that the *Roman de la rose* is an essentially moral poem, which has convinced Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer*, p. 100, and John V. Fleming, "Jean de Meun and the Ancient Poets," in *Rethinking the "Romance of the Rose"*, ed. Brownlee and Huot, pp. 81–100, at pp. 98–99.

¹⁰⁵ For a discussion of the authorship of these poems and the medieval formation of the canon of Jean de Meun's works see Silvia Buzzetti Gallarati, "Nota bibliografica sulla tradizione manoscritta del *Testament* di Jean de Meun," *Revue romane* 13 (1978), 2–32, esp. p. 7; and Jean de Meun, *Le testament Maistre Jehan de Meun: Un caso letterario*, ed. Silvia Buzzetti Gallarati (Alessandria, 1989), pp. 7–10 (quotations from the *Testament* are cited in the text by line number from this edition).

¹⁰⁶ *Le débat*, ed. Hicks, p. 10; *La querelle*, ed. and trans. Baird and Kane, p. 58.

¹⁰⁷ John V. Fleming, *The Roman de la rose: A Study in Allegory and Iconography* (Princeton, N.J., 1969), p. 8. The word "kaleidoscopic" comes from Sylvia Huot, "Medieval Readers of the *Roman de la rose*: The Evidence of Marginal Notations," *Romance Philology* 43 (1990), 400–420, at p. 400.

de Meun's *Testament* frequently appears with the *Rose* in what Fleming rightly describes as that poem's "most typical copies."¹⁰⁸ In the *Testament* the narrator offers advice to the male householder on how to prepare for death and how to improve not only his own spiritual fortunes but also those of others around him. In recognition of this mortuary conceit, the poem opens with an invocation to the Trinity in imitation of many contemporary wills: "Li Peres et li Filz et li Sains Esperis, / Uns Diex en trois personnes aourez et cheris" (1–2; "Praise and love the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God in three persons").¹⁰⁹ Settling his own accounts, the narrator of the *Testament* supplies a tantalizingly un-specific retraction: "J'ai fait en ma jeunesse maint dit par vanité" (5; "I have made, in my youth, many songs out of vanity"), which Jean de Meun's detractors claim is a repudiation of the *Roman de la rose*, a view that his supporters deny, preferring instead that it refer to some other lost works.¹¹⁰

Fleming's confidence about the internal consistency of Jean de Meun's work is predicated less upon the text, however, than upon the illuminations in those *Roman de la rose* manuscripts that also contain the *Testament*. Because of the *Testament*'s incipit, the poem's first folio is often illustrated with a full- or half-page image of the Trinity, and it is this image that Fleming argues proves a pious estimation of the *Rose* among its medieval readers.¹¹¹ This argument is underpinned by a number of suspect assumptions: first, that there are no tensions between the various items in a medieval manuscript or within an author's oeuvre; secondly, that the same creating mind that guarantees the homogeneity of a manuscript's contents also endorses its decorative schema; and thirdly, that any particular manuscript can be seen as synecdochic, exemplifying the way, the one way, that a work was read in the culture in which that manuscript was produced.

The Trinity images may have been intended to, but in fact do not, settle the conflicts between the two poems, nor do they always accord with those attitudes that the poems share. The illuminations often offer an ironic reading of exactly those parts of the *Rose* that Col and Fleming cite as evidence of Jean de Meun's didacticism. For example, while Genius's park is replete with an apparently seemly Trinitarianism, like the three water courses that supersede the originary two in Guillaume de Lorris's description of the Jardin de Deduit, this did not trouble

¹⁰⁸ Fleming, *A Study in Allegory*, p. viii. For a discussion of this regular pairing and what it says about audience see Sylvia Huot, *The "Romance of the Rose" and Its Medieval Readers: Interpretation, Reception, Manuscript Transmission*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 16 (Cambridge, Eng., 1993), pp. 32–33.

¹⁰⁹ The relationship between the poem and wills is suggested by Aimee Celeste Bourneuf, "The *Testament* of Jean de Meun: Vatican MS 367" (Ph.D. dissertation, Fordham University, 1956), p. v. This is not the only way to open a will, however, as shown by the sample presented in J. Broc et al., *Testaments provençaux du moyen âge: Documents paléographiques* (Marseille, 1979). The *Tresor* also opens with an invocation of the Trinity; that poem does not share the *Testament*'s concern that readers learn how to die. The *Tresor* is printed in *Le roman de la rose*, ed. M. Méon, 4 vols. (Paris, 1814), 3:331–95.

¹¹⁰ *Le débat*, ed. Hicks, pp. 64, 95, and 121; *La querelle*, ed. and trans. Baird and Kane, pp. 74, 98, and 121. Fleming also deems it unlikely that the retraction in the *Testament* refers to the *Rose*, but he offers no evidence: *A Study in Allegory*, p. 48.

¹¹¹ Fleming, *A Study in Allegory*, p. viii.

the late-fifteenth-century illuminator of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 195, who chose to depict those courses spraying from the breasts and genitalia of a naked female figure, who appears in bas-relief on the fountain of life. Charles Dahlberg captions his reproduction of this image as “The ‘Trinitarian’ Fountain of Life,” expressing a judicious circumspection about the seriousness with which this manuscript, at least, treated Genius’s Trinitarian teachings.¹¹² The illuminations interpret and complicate, rather than offering a window onto, an authentic reading of the *Rose*.

The illuminated Trinity pages evidently offered a space that could be customized, and, in that customizing, patrons presented themselves in relation both to the *Testament* and to the *Rose*. Several *Testament* manuscripts introduced a kneeling figure or figures into the Trinity illumination, presumably depicting the manuscripts’ first owners.¹¹³ This composition is familiar from books of hours, those other bespoke manuscripts, and they became fashionable for *Rose-Testament* manuscripts produced by Parisian ateliers from the middle of the fourteenth century. Kneeling figures are presented as laypeople, and the style of dress and inclusion of heraldry mark them out as elite, reflecting the likely demographic of these luxury productions. A number of these manuscripts represent the kneeling figures either as a couple (Fig. 2) or in family groups (Figs. 3, 4, and 5). The availability of a template for the page was probably not the only reason for using this space to insert an image of the self or the family. On account of this placing, owners are firmly identified with the *Testament*’s Trinitarian prayer and, by association, with the Trinitarian moment in Genius’s sermon in the *Roman de la*

¹¹² *The Romance of the Rose*, ed. and trans. Dahlberg, illustration 43, fol. 146r. I am grateful to Jane Gilbert for reminding me of this image.

¹¹³ Individual kneeling donors can be found in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 2592, and London, British Library, MS Royal 19.A.XXII (this manuscript does not contain the *Roman de la rose*, only the *Testament* and *Tresor*). A couple is represented in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 1565 (Fig. 2); families are depicted in Princeton University Library, MS Garrett 126; The Hague, Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum, MS 10.B.29; and New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.48 (Figs. 3, 4, and 5). Here I disagree with Lori Walters, “A Parisian Manuscript of the *Romance of the Rose*,” *Princeton University Library Chronicle* 31 (1989), 31–55, at p. 36, when she argues that Garrett 126, fol. 124r, depicts a “group of 2 clerics and 2 lay female figures.” The men wear hooded surcoats, but only the younger man is tonsured. Hooded surcoats were in fashion for both lay and clerical men in this period. See, for example, Françoise Piponnier and Perrine Mane, *Se vêtir au moyen âge* (Paris, 1995), pp. 84–85 and plates 23–24. What is more, the clothes in this illustration are very similar to those in other illustrations in the manuscript; see the images of the tonsured author at fol. 29v and of the lover and other secular figures throughout (for example, fol. 1r). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 24388, is, though, an anomaly. Here a group of six is represented in prayer to the Trinity. The figures are in gray, hooded, habitlike uniforms, the men as well as the women. The women have their hoods pulled up, but the men do not, as if to demonstrate that their heads are not tonsured, confusing a picture that might otherwise suggest two groups of religious: men on the one side and women on the other. All the figures are the same size in an effort to stress an equality that is not usually a feature of images that more evidently present family groups. The manuscript illumination presents this group ambiguously: they are neither axiomatically lay and blood-related nor religious and spiritually affined. It may be that they are images of married clerics as has been suggested of a similar image by Sandler, *Studies in Manuscript Illumination* (above, n. 48), p. 236.

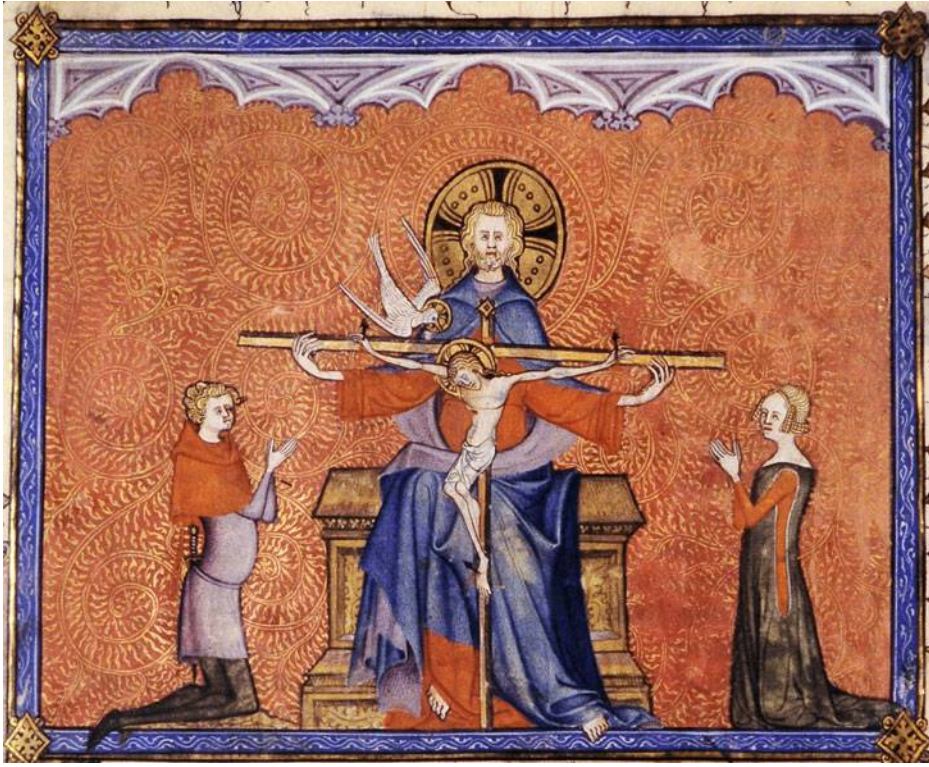


Fig. 2. Jean de Meun, *Testament Maistre Jehan de Meun*.

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 1565, fol. 143r.

(Reproduced by permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris [print edition only]; available online at <http://romandelarose.org/#read;Francais1565>.)

rose. The association with the Trinity was no doubt a positive one for secular owners, keen to align themselves with virtue, faith, and *caritas* rather than any of the more satiric and risqué elements in either the *Rose* or the *Testament*. Neither poem, after all, was only and principally about the Trinity, having much more worldly concerns, not least about marriage and family, and these illuminations look decidedly odd and in no way illustrate the way those themes are presented in either work. As others have suggested, the *Rose* and the *Testament* share a good deal: both, for example, explore antifraternal, antifeminist, and misogynist traditions.¹¹⁴ In the *Testament* these traditions work to reinforce the poem's antimaterialism, advising the implied male reader that the most valuable bequests he could make to those who survive him are of virtue rather than money, warning him about the corruption and avarice of family members and particular religious orders.

¹¹⁴ Fleming, *A Study in Allegory*, p. 49; Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Seeing through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory* (Toronto, 2004), p. 112.



Fig. 3. Jean de Meun, *Testament Maistre Jehan de Meun*.
 Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Library, Robert Garrett Collection
 of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, No. 126, fol. 154r.
 (Reproduced by permission of the Manuscripts Division Department of
 Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.)

While it is more homiletic than the *Roman de la rose* and while it even rehearses (albeit grudgingly) some of Augustine's writings on marriage—such as the idea of the three goods (481)—the *Testament* is hardly more positive on the subject; its cynicism finds marriage to be replete with banalities and miseries just in the way that so many of the characters in the *Rose* do. The *Testament's* narrator takes a dim view both of women and of children; the bereaved family are quick to forget the dead, failing to tend their graves, neglecting to say masses for departed souls. Wives are presented in the *Testament* just in the way that Jaloux Mari in the *Roman de la rose* describes his: as preoccupied with money and clothes. His troubles started, he says, when he took an elegant wife (8812); it is particularly her obsession with clothes that annoys him (8813–8926). Lengthy sermon-style passages in the *Testament* deplore certain women's fashions: espe-



Fig. 4. Jean de Meun, *Testament Maistre Jehan de Meun*.
New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.48, fol. 150r.
(Photographic credit: Pierpont Morgan Library.)

cially revealing décolletage (see, for example, 1225) and horned headdresses. The *Testament* particularly inveighs against widows who dress up to man-hunt at the anniversary requiems for their dead husbands (1209–10):

Se je l'osasse dire sanz eles courroucier,
Leur chaucier, leur vestir, leur lier, leur trespier,
Leur chaperons trousseur et leur cornes drescier
Ne sont venus avant fors pour hommes blecier.

(1241–44)

[If I may say so, without angering them,
Their shoes, their clothes, their lacing, their coiffure,
Their cowls trussed and their horns erect
They are brought forward only to injure men.]

Horned hats here become weapons in a joust between the sexes; these Amazonian widows raise their phallic horns ready to impale men in a way that thoroughly disrupts the appropriate gender order. The first line cited here insincerely suggests that it might work to moderate the tone of the passage.

This is only a part of a much larger invective that everywhere works to establish a homosocial fear of women's cosmetic fakery:

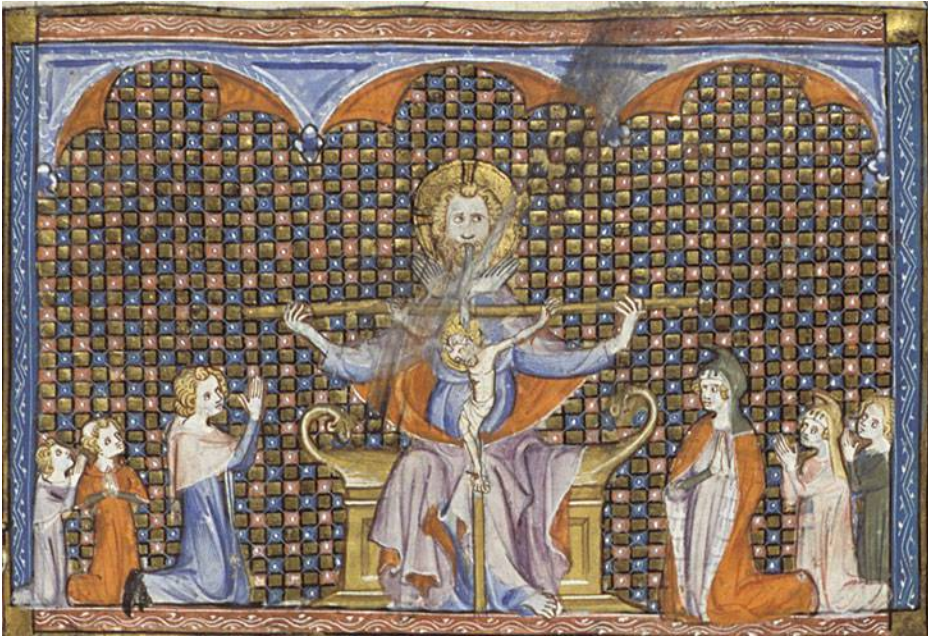


Fig. 5. Jean de Meun, *Testament Maistre Jehan de Meun*.

The Hague, Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum,
MS 10.B.29, fol. 124r.

(Reproduced by permission of the Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum.)

Tu qui ce pués veoir sanz mauvés desirier
Et sanz pensser folie dont Diex se doie irier,
Voiz comment elles scevent tout leur corps atirier,
Par si que du veoir ne doies empirier.

(1217–20)

[You who can see look without desiring evil
And without occasioning folly at which God might take offence,
See how they know to attire all their bodies,
Provided that by this sight you do not suffer harm.]

The reader is warned here about the dangers of looking at these Medusa-like widows even while he is commanded to look. The *Testament*'s interest in women's clothing is at once repudiating and fascinated. This ambivalence toward female sexuality is also to be found in the *Rose* in which many personifications document, or themselves embody, the problem with women (especially married women) and yet celebrate the pleasures of heterosexual sex. This repudiating, misogynist, and misogamist textual thread, which describes women as monstrously materialist, does not similarly string together the illuminations in the group of *Testament-Rose* manuscripts with donor couples or families kneeling to the Trinity. Indeed, these Trinity images are exactly opposite to the representation of female and familial venality in both texts. And yet at the same time, the customized Trinity



Fig. 6. Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Roman de la rose*.

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 1565, fol. 1r.

(Reproduced by permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris [print edition only]; available online at <http://romandelarose.org/#read;Francais1565.>)

image countervails, rather than cancels, the *Rose's* erotic ambiguities. The *Testament's* Trinities were no doubt intended to make morally difficult aspects of the *Rose* look safe, but they also enabled their colorful depiction. Just in the way that Jean de Meun's work can equally be said to continue and preserve, as much as it negates, Guillaume de Lorris's *Rose*, so the use of Trinity iconography both contrasts with and licenses the *Rose's* illustrative schema.

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 1565, is a case in point. The incipit page of the *Testament*, which depicts a couple kneeling to the Trinity (Fig. 2), could not be more different from the mercurial and carnivalesque first folio of the *Rose* (Fig. 6), with its suggestive rubric, common to many manuscripts: "Ci commence le romant de la rose / ou lart damours est toute enclose" (Here begins the *Romance of the Rose*, which comprises all the art of love). This page is decorated with one of the most typical images for *Rose* manuscripts of the mid-fourteenth century; divided into four compartments, it shows the dreamer moving in stages from his bed to the garden of love. The bottom margin shows stags, their horns locking with the ears of hares, battling for unseen females. Their combative stances give a foretaste of the comedy of mismatched opponents that the *Rose* delivers; this is a poem of two parts, parts of different lengths and purposes.¹¹⁵ The stag, a symbol of lust, and the hermaphroditic hare promise a battle over right sexual couplings, wrangles that also feature in the *Rose*.¹¹⁶ The images of couples in the *Roman de la rose* illuminations in BnF fr. 1565 are of their kissing and embracing, as in the illustration of the story of Pygmalion (fol. 138r), or in bed together, as in the illustration of "lauteur de nature qui est en la forge & ses oeuvres" (fol. 104v; "the author Nature who is in the forge and her works"). These were presumably the kinds of images that offended the sensibilities of Jean Gerson, who complained that the *Roman de la rose* corrupts not just through "paroles dissolues et que luxurieuses escriptures" but also by "paintures" ("dissolute, filthy, lecherous, writings" and "pictures").¹¹⁷ The image of the couple at prayer to the Trinity is an evident contrast, and in its composition it specifies the contextualizing institution of marriage, which Christine de Pizan would later say ought to have featured more positively in the *Rose* itself.

As Pierre Col would also do later, the *Rose-Testament* manuscripts with kneeling spouses made the texts mean what they ought to mean, discovering the Augustinian ideal of marriage and interpolating it into Jean de Meun's work, imagining it to be his "point." The use of heraldry suggests an estates position on marriage and a dynastic vision of genealogy, which trumps the attitudes and pessimism toward the same subjects in these poems. Folio 1r of BnF fr. 1565, for example, depicts a coat of arms, which is now much blackened; a late hand suggests it is the arms of the house of Poitiers ("d'azur a vi besans d'argent pores 3.2.1 au chef d'or"). New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.48, is thought,

¹¹⁵ On the difficulty of the poem's bipartite structure see Daniel Heller-Roazen, *Fortune's Faces: The "Roman de la rose" and the Poetics of Contingency* (Baltimore, 2003), pp. 1–10.

¹¹⁶ The stag and hare are ubiquitous in medieval marginalia as symbols of the hunt with all its erotic suggestiveness. See Dorothy Yamamoto, *The Boundaries of the Human in Medieval English Literature* (Oxford, 2000), p. 108.

¹¹⁷ *Le débat*, ed. Hicks, p. 68; *La querelle*, ed. and trans. Baird and Kane, p. 77.

on the evidence of the heraldry, to have been made for Charles V of France.¹¹⁸ It is no doubt partly this class position that permits this contradiction between text and picture. The invective against women's dress in the *Testament*, for example, aims its satire squarely at aspirant bourgeois widows:

Voiz comment eles portent leur mantiaux gentement;
Voiz comment el se chauce contemplantivement;
Voiz comment eles nagent dessus le pavement.

(1221–23)

[See how they carry their cloaks nobly;
See how they put on their shoes contemplatively;
See how they glide over the pavement.]

The ironic adverbs offer repetitive alarms about the false seemliness and sophistication of the women's gestures. When the hopeful widows hold their cloaks "gentement" and when they put on their shoes "contemplantivement," they pretend to be something they are not, affecting aristocratic or religious bearings. The *Testament* describes the lives of people in a very different social sphere from those depicted kneeling in its Trinity illuminations. However, the *Testament's* cynicism about bourgeois family attachments is never offset by an ideal of good married life. That ideal becomes a haunting absence in the text but one that these manuscripts illustrate anyway as a reflexive identification.

Nonetheless, the costumes and colors, the headdresses, and other voguish elements in these images look odd in relation to the *contemptus mundi* theme of the *Testament*. All the characters in these pictures are presented in brightly colored sartorial dress, men as well as women. The elaborately braided hair of the lady in BnF fr. 1565 defies the *Testament's* distaste at women's "trescier." Older girls and women in these images are frequently presented in headdresses.¹¹⁹ The *Testament* reserves a good deal of space for discussing the construction of improbable headwear, which it imagines needing "d'espingles une demie escuele" (1227; "half a pot of pins"). The illuminations also show elaborately engineered millinery; in The Hague manuscript of the *Testament* (Fig. 5) two of the female figures are depicted either in horned headdresses or in the kinds of pointed cowls that the *Testament* also associates with coquetry (1243). While these contradictions might be read as part of an amusedly "retro" pose (these patrons had themselves painted as earlier gendered caricatures), the design, being a borrowing from more clearly devotional books, is more earnest than such a reading allows. These images clearly have a different and less satiric force than the text they accom-

¹¹⁸ For the discussion about the ownership of this manuscript see Meradith T. McMunn, "Programs of Illustration in *Roman de la rose* Manuscripts Owned by Patrons and Friends of Christine de Pizan," in *Au champ des escriptures: IIIe colloque international sur Christine de Pizan*, ed. Eric Hicks et al., Études Christiniennes 6 (Paris, 2000), pp. 737–53, at p. 753. Since Charles V was Christine de Pizan's patron, and she, his biographer, it is not inconceivable that she could have seen this manuscript (p. 745).

¹¹⁹ Princeton, Garrett 126, fol. 154r; Pierpont Morgan M.48, fol. 150r; Meermannno-Westreenianum 10.B.29, fol. 124r.

pany; the headdresses in the pictures do not suggest these women as lascivious man hunters but rather signal the modest covering of the hair, just as head coverings do when they appear in the later Bolton Hours.¹²⁰ These women are presented as noble and dignified even as they wear the same hats as the women for whom the *Testament* reserves its most livid misogyny. These are pictures that, unlike the texts in the manuscripts they illustrate, find a moral place for familial ties, expensive clothing, and horned hats; these images aestheticize and promote things that are actively satirized and denigrated in the poetry they decorate.

These images, then, are paratexts, readings rather than contiguous outgrowths, of the texts in the Jean de Meun manuscripts. While Gerson held Jean responsible for the images in the *Rose* and while Fleming, too, insists that the images testify to the authentic meaning of Jean's writing, they do not reveal the intentions of the author, being painted at least half a century later than the text was composed.¹²¹ Patrons had their own agenda, and they used these manuscripts to present themselves—as laypeople, as families, and as married couples—in relation to their God. These early readers asked those who came after them to remember them not as individuals but in relation to their families and, also, as participants in Trinitarian *caritas*, quite in the face of the fact that the conjugal family is not explicitly included in either text's consideration of the Trinity. Sophisticatedly negotiating misogynist politics, these readers added to and pluralized Jean de Meun's text, writing their own selves and their own values into an already polysemous oeuvre.

4. THE POLITICS OF MARRIAGE: LADY COBHAM'S BRASSES AND THE ORDRE DU SAINT-ESPRIT AU DROIT DÉSIR

The Trinity illuminations in the *Roman de la rose* manuscripts legitimate the institution of marriage, even within texts that are at best indifferent to it. My next two examples demonstrate a different kind of legitimization, one that uses marriage in conjunction with the Trinity to declare other proprieties. The first is an illumination in a lavish manuscript produced in Naples in around 1353—Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 4274 (Fig. 7)—the other a pair of funerary brasses from Cobham in Kent (c. 1409; Figs. 8 and 9).¹²² The historical record that accompanies these *objets de luxe* offers a suggestive sense of the possible political potency of Trinity imagery in the making of claims about particular marriages.

¹²⁰ On hairdressing and femininity see Kim M. Phillips, *Medieval Maidens: Young Women and Gender, 1270–1540* (Manchester, Eng., 2003), p. 46. On the hairstyles in the Bolton Hours see Riddy and Rees Jones, "Female Domestic Piety" (above, n. 65), p. 253.

¹²¹ *Le débat*, ed. Hicks, p. 68; *La querelle*, ed. and trans. Baird and Kane, p. 77.

¹²² For a full description of Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 4274, see *Dix siècles d'enluminure italienne (VIe–XVIe siècles)* (Paris, 1984), pp. 74–75, no. 61. The dating for the Cobham brasses is suggested by Nigel Saul, *Death, Art, and Memory in Medieval England: The Cobham Family and Their Monuments, 1300–1500* (Oxford, 2001), p. 114. A full account of the Cobham brasses is there embedded in the histories of the family and the social attitudes for which they are evidence.



Fig. 7. *Statuts de l'Ordre du Saint-Esprit au Droit Désir*.
 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 4274, fol. 2r.
 (Reproduced by permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris
 [print edition only].)

The Trinity illumination in BnF fr. 4274 is very similar to those in the *Rose* manuscripts, and, like them, it puts a devotional image to new purpose. This is a unique manuscript, which lays out the statutes of a new chivalric order, the Ordre du Saint-Esprit au Droit Désir, which was founded by Louis Taranto on his investiture as king of Naples in 1352.¹²³ While the rest of the manuscript shows Louis at the head of the all-male order, the first illustration is different, showing—as the inscription announces—the royal couple, Louis and Joanna I, with two children, one of either sex, kneeling to a throne-of-grace Trinity surrounded by a host of angels. As well as being related to the *Rose* manuscripts by design, it is connected by the social and political milieu of its owners, since *Rose* manuscripts were common in the libraries of the Angevin elites. For example, it has been suggested that Pierpont Morgan MS M.48 (Fig. 4) was made for Joanna's cousin Charles V of France; Charles's brother Louis d'Anjou (whom Joanna was to name as her adoptive heir in 1380) was also in possession of an illuminated *Rose*.¹²⁴ The aesthetic proximities between Naples and Paris in this period are well attested and parallel equally close political and military alliances.¹²⁵ Indeed, Nicolas Bock has read the Trinity frontispiece to the statutes of Louis's chivalric order as evidence for a shared symbolic repertoire within not only the courts of France and Angevin Naples but also that of England, through the fourteenth century, all of which used Franciscan Trinitarianism to astute political purpose.¹²⁶ Bock does not, however, identify the figures on that frontispiece as a representation of family, nor is he interested in the gendered or sexual ethics that the image asserts. I suggest, however, that marriage and family are an inextricable element of the picture's rhetorical force.

Unlike the *Rose-Testament* manuscripts, the Trinity image in BnF fr. 4274 is placed at the opening of the manuscript and, as such, offers a statement on the authority of marriage prominently and insistently. Louis's crown came to him *de iure uxoris*, and he insists on that right in the pictorial preface to this nakedly instrumental manuscript. The seemliness, indeed the legality, of his marriage had been brought into question, having taken place within a year of the suspicious death of Joanna's previous husband and consort, Andrew of Hungary.¹²⁷ That death had formed the pretext for the invasion of Naples by Andrew's brother, and, in enforced exile in Provence, Louis and Joanna secured, and paid a considerable price for, dispensations from Pope Clement VI, which both absolved

¹²³ On the politics of this order see, for example, Bock, "L'Ordre du Saint-Esprit" (above, n. 61), esp. pp. 424–27.

¹²⁴ On these libraries see McMunn, "Programs of Illustration," pp. 745–46. On Joanna's relationship to Louis d'Anjou see Nancy Goldstone, *The Lady Queen: The Notorious Reign of Joanna I, Queen of Naples, Jerusalem, and Sicily* (New York, 2009), p. 294.

¹²⁵ For the French influence on the Angevin court of Naples see Émile Bertaux, "Les artistes français au service des rois angevins de Naples," *Gazette des beaux-arts* 34 (1905), 89–114.

¹²⁶ Bock, "L'Ordre du Saint-Esprit," pp. 416 and 428–37.

¹²⁷ For the historical narrative of the reign see Louise Michel, *La Reine Jeanne de Naples et de Provence: Histoire et légendes* (Spéracèdes, Fr., 1995); Dominique Paladilhe, *La Reine Jeanne, comtesse de Provence* (Paris, 1997); and Goldstone, *The Lady Queen*.

them of murder and recognized their union.¹²⁸ The chivalric order was established on their restoration as part of a move to settle and unify a fractious nobility into a sacral brotherhood.¹²⁹ This manuscript and its idealization of the royal union are only a part of a grand program of commissions that emphasized marriage as a sacrament and that accompanied the extended celebrations that marked the couple's restoration.¹³⁰ At about the same time, for example, building work began on the Church of Santa Maria Incoronata, which was to be decorated with a grand fresco of the seven sacraments. Again the couple had themselves painted as ideal spouses in a picture of marriage.¹³¹

Bock suggests that the smaller figures behind Louis and Joanna in BnF fr. 4274 are members of their entourage.¹³² However, given the similarities to other images in books of hours and the *Roman de la rose* manuscripts, I think instead that they are pictures of the couple's future children. By 1353 Joanna and Louis had had two children, both girls; one of them was dead and the other too young to be represented by the adolescent woman depicted in the illumination. Joanna's son by her first husband was also dead by this date and so cannot have been intended as the figure that kneels behind Louis and above whose head a crown is held by angels. The picture divines the future, foretelling a symmetrical royal family and a solid line of succession predicated on the conjugal cell. The royal family is proximate to God; their union and their future and continued governance are divinely sanctioned. Angels lower the crown onto the head of Louis's unborn son in an expression of his and his descendants' spiritual right to rule. This accent upon the magico-religious is evident throughout the rest of the manuscript, which continually embeds the Ordre du Saint-Esprit in Angevin mythology, offering its hoped-for three hundred chevaliers ritual privileges in return for their submission to economic and political surveillance.¹³³ The Trinity illumination was part of an attempt by Louis to secure the political benefits of his marriage to Joanna in uncertain times. In this way the political settlement that followed civil war is offered along with a promise of married *caritas* at the heart of royal government. Theirs, like that of the company of chevaliers who made up Louis's order, was a *droit désir* indeed.

The funeral brasses of Reginald Braybrooke (Fig. 8) and Nicholas Hawberke (Fig. 9), in Saint Mary Magdalene Church at Cobham in Kent, do not use this

¹²⁸ The price was the city of Avignon, which was in Joanna's gift as countess of Provence. See David Abulafia, *The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms, 1200–1500: The Struggle for Dominion* (New York, 1997), pp. 162–64.

¹²⁹ David Abulafia, "Southern Italy and the Florentine Economy, 1265–1370," *Economic History Review* 33 (1981), 377–88, at p. 383; D'Arcy Jonathan Dacre Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown: The Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe, 1325–1520* (Woodbridge, Eng., 1987), p. 240.

¹³⁰ Bock, "L'Ordre du Saint-Esprit," p. 426.

¹³¹ Paola Vitolo, *La chiesa della regina: L'Incoronata di Napoli, Giovanna I d'Angiò e Roberto di Odesio* (Rome, 2008), p. 15 n. 18.

¹³² Bock, "L'Ordre du Saint-Esprit," p. 419.

¹³³ BnF fr. 4272, fols. 5v–6r. For the folklore and romance traditions exploited by Louis and his manuscript see Paladilhe, *La Reine Jeanne*, p. 35; and Émile G. Léonard, *Les Angevins de Naples* (Paris, 1954), pp. 368 and 371.

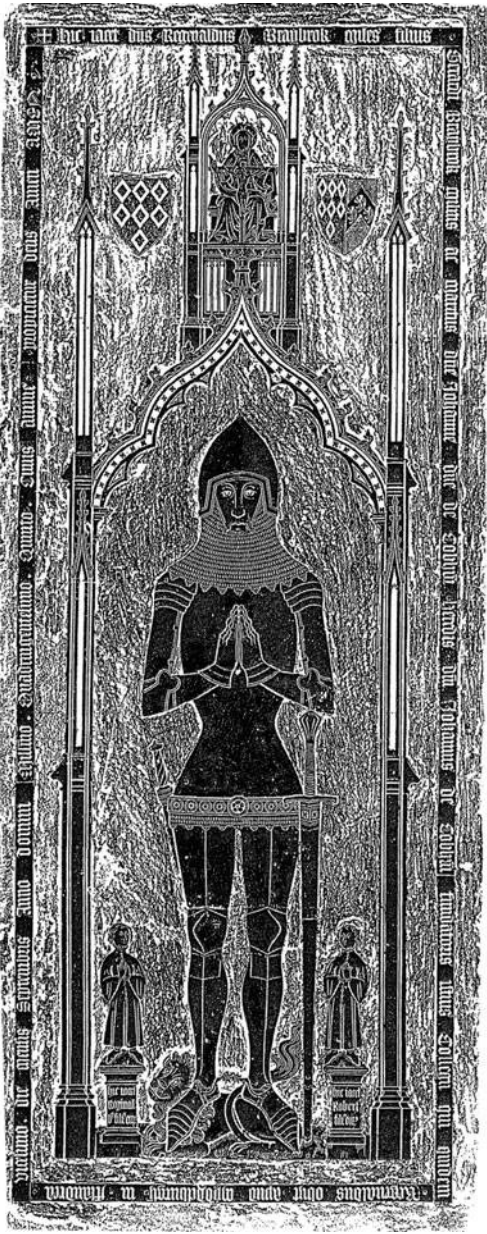


Fig. 8. (*left*). Tomb of Reginald Braybrooke. Fig. 9 (*right*). Tomb of Nicholas Hawberke. Saint Mary Magdalene Church, Cobham, Kent.
(Reproduced by permission of the Monumental Brass Society.)

same design; instead they each incorporate a throne-of-grace Trinity in an architectural canopy above the full frontal form of an armored male figure.¹³⁴ Neither man is kneeling. Both brasses include the smaller figures of little boys, who stand on pedestals on which their names are written: Reginald's two sons are represented symmetrically, one on either side; on Nicholas's tomb one boy stands on his father's right. These monuments are coeval with the earliest (surviving) English brasses to adopt the design of the Trinity with kneeling couples, which was evidently not yet a widely available template in this medium.¹³⁵ The similarity of the two Cobham brasses, which suggests they were ordered together, exposes the commissioning agency of Lady Joan Cobham.¹³⁶ These are memorials to her second and third husbands and, in addition, to the sons they had fathered. Their similarities render them a pair and emphasize the marriage bonds that secured these memorials space in the Cobham family church.

Lady Cobham's predicament must be more speculatively imagined than Louis Taranto's. The commissioning of the brasses is coincident with, rather than so evidently a corollary of, curious and difficult circumstances. The brasses were commissioned and made probably a little after Joan had married her fourth husband, John Oldcastle, another man who, it is thought, secured offices and title by right of his wife.¹³⁷ These two brasses are early examples of both the iconographic use of the Trinity and the representation of children on English inlaid stone.¹³⁸ But these were not the first uses of the Trinity in the family's mausoleum. The brass of Sir Thomas de Cobham, probably engraved on his death in 1367, included a short invocation to "le haut Trinite" and that of John, the third lord of Cobham, which was made in the same year and during John's lifetime, also mentioned "la sainte Trinite." Both occurrences suggest the personal influence of the third lord whose devotion to the Trinity was in imitation of a similar devotion held by his friend Edward the Black Prince, which is well attested by the contemporary chroniclers; Trinitarian iconography is also given an emphatic space on Edward's tomb in Canterbury Cathedral.¹³⁹

¹³⁴ The tomb of Nicholas Hawberke also includes a Virgin and Child and a St. George fighting the dragon.

¹³⁵ Such a design can be seen, for example, on the 1408 tomb of Robert Parys and his wife at Hildersham in Cambridgeshire. See H. F. Owen Evans, "The Holy Trinity on Brasses," *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society* 13 (1980–85), 208–23, at p. 215.

¹³⁶ On the suggestion that these are a pair see Saul, *Death, Art and Memory*, p. 114.

¹³⁷ John A. F. Thomson, "Oldcastle, John, Baron Cobham (D. 1417)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), online at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20674> (accessed 20 February 2009).

¹³⁸ On the history of the use of the Trinity on brass see Evans, "The Holy Trinity on Brasses," p. 210. On the inclusion of children on brass see Saul, *Death, Art and Memory*, p. 113; and Paul Binski, "Monumental Brasses," in *The Age of Chivalry*, ed. Alexander and Binski (above, n. 59), pp. 171–73, at p. 172.

¹³⁹ Saul, *Death, Art, and Memory*, pp. 98–100. On the Black Prince's devotion to the Trinity see Richard Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine: A Biography of the Black Prince* (London, 1978; repr. 2003), pp. 240–41. Also see the frontispiece to Chandos Herald's *Life of Edward the Prince of Wales and Aquitaine*, in London, University of London, MS 1, fol. 1v, reproduced in Richard Barber, ed. and trans., *The Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince from Contemporary Let-*

While John Oldcastle's heretical leanings would not come under official scrutiny until 1410 and while his name would not be popularly associated with heresy until 1413, he is documented in the company of men with Lollard sympathies as early as 1404.¹⁴⁰ More broadly, the brasses are coincident with a culture marked by religious contest and iconoclasm. It was the iconographic—rather than the inscriptional—representation of the Trinity, and particularly the throne-of-grace Trinity, of the kind for which Lady Cobham opted, that was at the brunt of Wycliffite objections to the image: “And thus laymen depict the Trinity unfaithfully, as if God the Father was an aged *paterfamilias*, having God the Son crucified on his knees and God the Holy Spirit descending on both as a dove. And similarly concerning many other likenesses, by which not only laymen but ecclesiastical superiors err in faith, thinking the Father or Holy Spirit or angels to be corporeal.”¹⁴¹ That type of image is exactly the one picked by Joan Cobham to ornament her past husbands' tombs even though she might have chosen merely a mention of the Trinity in the inscriptions, in proper imitation of her grandfather. Even supposing that some images, indeed many, were removed by later iconoclasts, the paucity suggests that she chose designs that were very new for the medium.¹⁴² In this way she significantly and somewhat pointedly augmented the family's Trinitarian tradition beyond words and into image. J. A. F. Thomson has suggested that Joan attempted to distance herself from Oldcastle after his execution in 1417. His evidence is a papal indult dated to 1421, which permitted Joan to elect her own confessor and which styles her as “Joan Pole *alias* Braybrooke,” using her maiden name followed by that of her second husband.¹⁴³ Joan also used the name Braybrooke, rather than any other, on the inscription of her own tomb. Reginald Braybrooke was a marshal in the household of his uncle Robert Braybrooke, bishop of London (1381–1404), who was instrumental in the prosecution and detention of Lollards like William Thorpe, a man with good orthodox connections.¹⁴⁴ Much earlier than the indult and Joan's

ters, *Diaries and Chronicles, including Chandos Herald's "Life of the Black Prince"* (Woodbridge, Eng., 1979), plate 1.

¹⁴⁰ Thomson, “Oldcastle, John, Baron Cobham (D. 1417).” In 1413 his name was used as an insult against Margery Kempe, whom a detractor labeled “cobhammis daughter.” See Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe* 1.2.54, ed. Lynn Staley (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1996), line 3116.

¹⁴¹ This translation from John Wycliffe, *De mandatis divinis*, is cited in Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, p. 99.

¹⁴² On the damage done to images of the Trinity by religious iconoclasts see, for example, Aston, *England's Iconoclasts* (above, n. 58), pp. 70 and 76.

¹⁴³ J. A. F. Thomson, “Knightly Piety and the Margins of Lollardy,” in *Lollardy and the Gentry in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Margaret Aston and Colin Richmond (New York, 1997), pp. 95–111, at pp. 101–2.

¹⁴⁴ On Thorpe's detention by Braybrooke see Joanna Summers, *Late Medieval Prison-Writing and the Politics of Autobiography* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 108 and 115. Reginald's orthodoxy has been brought into question by K. B. McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights* (Oxford, 1972), p. 217. McFarlane's evidence is Reginald's marriage to Joan—which I am contesting here—and the wording of his brother Gerald's will, which has been disputed by Thomson, “Knightly Piety,” pp. 95, 101–2, and 104.

tomb inscription, these two brasses are an iteration of the family's and Joan's own orthodoxy, declared through a resort to marriage.¹⁴⁵

A similar emphasis upon the family and faith, a faith that places the Trinity first and centrally, is to be found in Thomas Hoccleve's "Ballade to Sir John Oldcastle":

Some wommen eeke, thogh hir wit be thynne,
 Wole argumentes make in holy writ!
 Lewde calates! Sitteth doun and spyne,
 And kakele of sumwhat elles, for your wit
 Is al to feeble to despute of it!
 To Clerkes grete apparteneth þat aart
 The knowleche of þat, god hath fro yow shit;
 Stynte and leue of for right sclendre is your paart.

Oure fadres olde & modres lyued wel,
 And taghte hir children as hem self taght were
 Of holy chirche & axid nat a del
 "Why stant this word heere?" and "why this word there?"
 "Why spake god thus and seith thus elles where?"
 "Why dide he this wyse and mighte han do thus?"
 Our fadres medled no thyng of swich gere:
 Þat oghte been a good mirour to vs.

If land to thee be falle of heritage,
 Which þat thy fadir heeld in reste & pees,
 With title iust & trewe in al his age,
 And his fadir before him brygelees
 And his and his & so foorth doutelees
 I am ful seur who so wolde it thee reue,
 Thow woldest thee deffende & putte in prees;
 Thy right thow woldest nat, thy thanks, leue.

(145–68)¹⁴⁶

This poem is a defense of marriage and family and as such represents an anomaly within Hoccleve's verse.¹⁴⁷ More usually in his oeuvre the theme of marriage is discussed discontentedly. Here though, marriage is a necessary force that will ward off the threat of heresy.¹⁴⁸ This excerpt insists on household, family, dynasty, and the transference of property as the traditional structures that will banish religious curiosity. Addressing himself to the second estate, and projecting an ideal of knightly masculinity, rather than the clerical masculinity with which he

¹⁴⁵ For a discussion about gender and piety in the circle around Joan Cobham, and in particular her connection with the vowess Margery de Nerford, see Mary C. Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge, Eng., 2002), pp. 51–53 and 64–65.

¹⁴⁶ Thomas Hoccleve, "The Ballade to Sir John Oldcastle," in Thomas Hoccleve, *Hoccleve's Works: The Minor Poems*, ed. F. J. Furnivall and I. Gollancz, rev. J. Mitchell and A. I. Doyle, EETS ES 61 and 73 (Oxford, 1970), pp. 8–24.

¹⁴⁷ Davis, *Writing Masculinity* (above, n. 80), pp. 158–62.

¹⁴⁸ On the relationship between the case for marriage and heretical movements see John D. Baldwin, *The Language of Sex: Five Voices from Northern France around 1200* (Chicago, 1994), pp. 2–4.

identifies himself, Hoccleve is able to muster support for the secular life as part of an ancient and holistic order.

But Hoccleve's vision of family is very different from that suggested by the Cobham brasses; indeed Hoccleve's is a fantasy of unbroken agnatic lines, a fantasy that was not often borne out in experience. This was very far from being the reality of household formation in the post-Black Death period. Households were both emptying and expanding; bouts of plague were followed by birth spikes; people died, and the orphaned and widowed survivors were taken in.¹⁴⁹ Unlike the image of Louis and Joanna, kneeling with their unborn children, the Cobham tombs look backwards. They movingly depict the early severance of two agnatic lines, rather than the transference of right and faith from father to father "bryegeles." But they also tell the story of the continuance of Joan's natal attachments and maternal lines: Joan inherited her lands and title from her maternal grandfather in 1408. It is fitting, then, that she recalls her grandfather's attachment to the Trinity. Although he discards his characteristic misogamy in the "Ballade," Hoccleve retains the antifeminism that he uses elsewhere in his work to articulate the clerical subjectivity of his fictional narrators. Tellingly, if further evidence were needed for the connectedness of English and French discussions of women and marriage, Hoccleve was to adopt this gynophobic pose most pointedly in a reference to the work of Christine de Pizan in *The Series*, where the narrator articulates his anxiety about an earlier translation of her *Epistre au dieu d'amours*.¹⁵⁰ But the Cobham tombs present a different, and yet no less powerful, image of family, which one might rather connect with Christine de Pizan's optimistic discussions of women in marriage, of the breeding they bring to a union, of their potential for positive influence, on their conduct should they outlive their husbands, and of women's furtherance of the faith.¹⁵¹

Hoccleve was not the only bridge between the English gentry and French courtly fashions; in particular the French tastes of many of the so-called Lollard Knights are well attested.¹⁵² It has been suggested that Hoccleve may have met Jean Castel, Christine de Pizan's son, and gained access to her work while he was in the household of John Montagu, the third earl of Salisbury, who has been associated with the Lollard movement on account of his support for Nicholas Hereford, the Lollard cleric.¹⁵³ This is not to argue that Christine de Pizan or her son had Lollard sympathies or that a vigorous marriage agenda was exclusive to a heretical

¹⁴⁹ See, for example, the extraordinary expansions and contractions of the household of the Florentine merchant Lapo di Giovanni Niccolini di Sirigatti, described and assessed in Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy*, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Chicago, 1985), pp. 69–73.

¹⁵⁰ Davis, *Writing Masculinity*, pp. 154–55.

¹⁵¹ See, for example, *Le débat*, ed. Hicks, p. 128; *La querelle*, ed. and trans. Baird and Kane, p. 127; and Christine de Pizan, *The Book of Peace*, ed. and trans. Karen Green (Philadelphia, 2008), pp. 188–90 and 314–16.

¹⁵² McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights*, p. 182.

¹⁵³ Christine Reno, "Christine de Pizan's *Enseignemens moraux*: Good Advice for Several Generations" (2005), p. 7, online at <http://www.pizan.lib.ed.ac.uk/morauxnov05.pdf> (accessed 1 May 2010). On Christine's English connections see J. C. Laidlaw, "Christine de Pizan, the Earl of Salisbury and

elite. It is often noted and worth repeating that the lines between orthodoxy and heterodoxy are not easily drawn in this period; contradictory views might exist within communities, political groupings, families, and even within an individual.¹⁵⁴ Lollardy gave a special spur to ethical considerations of marriage, partly because it was fervently championed by those on both sides of the debate. It has been suggested of an earlier period that the status of marriage was improved in response to Cathar repudiation.¹⁵⁵ Although Lollard and Cathar thinking on marriage are exactly antithetical, they seem nonetheless to have inspired a similar cultural possessiveness over the institution of matrimony in the orthodox community. It is this that no doubt motivated Hoccleve's uncharacteristic defense of the institution. Alastair Minnis has argued that the discussion of marriage in Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Prologue* was equally provoked by the *Roman de la rose* and by Lollard arguments about clerical celibacy and consent within marriage.¹⁵⁶ It is no coincidence to find Trinitarian associations gathering around the idea of marriage in the English gentry circles, like those to which the Cobhams belonged, that were familiar both with French culture and the alternative possibilities being explored by Lollard sympathizers.

The cases discussed above are extreme ones, but they can also be read metonymically. The assertive claims that Louis Taranto and Joan Cobham made for the settling power of their particular marriages can be extended to consider the case that was being made for married life in the wider use of this analogy. While Joan's and Louis's commissions can be read as counterblasts to rumors and imputations, the broader use of the Trinity testifies to an insecurity—within some social groups and the texts, books, and objects they produced or paid for—about recommending and representing the idea of marriage by itself, without the support of a doctrine and system of symbols with more ritual muscle. The cases I have discussed in this article adopt and adapt older ideas and designs, recycling them in ways that do not precisely observe the conditions that governed their first formulation.

In their writings William Langland and Julian of Norwich see and circumambulate the exclusions and difficulties governing an analogy to which, in their singular ways, they are ideologically attached. Julian is drawn to the parental analogy for the first and second persons of the Trinity because of her interest in Bernardine mysticism, which celebrated the maternity of Christ. Her work is scrupulously Augustinian even where it presses at the limits that Augustine placed

Henry IV," *French Studies* 36 (1982), 129–43, at p. 130. On Montagu's Lollard links see McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights*, p. 182.

¹⁵⁴ See, for example, Lipton, *Affections of the Mind* (above, n. 32), p. 93; and Alastair Minnis, *Fallible Authors: Chaucer's Pardoner and the Wife of Bath* (Philadelphia, 2008), p. 277.

¹⁵⁵ Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society* (above, n. 72), p. 431. Baldwin, *The Language of Sex*, p. 4, has suggested that this is often a response to the assault on sexual ethics that comes from heretical movements.

¹⁵⁶ Minnis, *Fallible Authors*, pp. 264–82. The Lollard inspiration for the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* has also been discussed by Alcuin Blamires, "The Wife of Bath and Lollardy," *Medium aevum* 58 (1989), 224–42, esp. p. 231.

around the analogies with which she engages. Langland, ever fascinated by social institutions and both the disorder and the possibilities of households, marriages, and families, wrote and rewrote his response to the theological formulations of the analogy. Langland's sociotheological poetics complicate, but do not reject, strict (and restrictive) assessments of conjugality that labeled it as lesser and limited. Owners and readers of the *Roman de la rose* found a traditional prayer-book image and imported it into manuscripts that were addressing different questions and that were, therefore, used and read very differently. In this way these readers participated in otherwise exclusionary considerations of *caritas* in the poetry of Jean de Meun. Exposing marriage to Trinitarian traction served to assert those aspects of the institution of marriage that were most culturally valuable over those that were not. It claimed for familial intimacy the same kind of honor that was given to other forms of *caritas* that underpinned medieval political and legal theory. It made marriage into a recommendation, firming up its relationship to ritual structures, imagined ideals, and aesthetic potencies.

Isabel Davis is Lecturer in Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature at Birkbeck College, University of London (e-mail: i.davis@bbk.ac.uk).